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Seattle Opera Has Its First CFO Katherine Anderson Joins Opera Staff

Seattle—Seattle Opera has added a new position to its administrative staff: **Chief Financial Officer**.

The CFO's duties at Seattle Opera include appraising the company's financial position; analyzing budget issues affecting operations; overseeing and directing the development, installation, and integration of state-of-the-art accounting software; maintaining a rigorous system of internal controls; and preparing the Opera's annual financial statements.

The Opera's first Chief Financial Officer is **Katherine Anderson**, who joined the staff this fall and reports directly to Administrative Director Kelly Tweeddale. "What attracted us to Katherine," says Seattle Opera's Treasurer Jeffrey Hanna, "is her formidable background in financial management and her familiarity with and involvement in the non-profit, charitable sector. As our assets grow, Anderson's experience with cash management should be of great assistance to us."

Tweeddale, addressing the significance of this new position, and distinguishing it from the position of Finance Director, explains "Seattle Opera has grown as a company both in scope and in sophistication. We have always been a well-managed company, but with an operating budget of approximately \$20 million that includes the management of real-estate assets and cash investments, we thought this was an opportunity for us to look strategically to the needs of the future. Katherine has an impressive background that includes combining her nonprofit accounting expertise with her background in accounting software and systems integration. Both skills are essential to the strategic future of Seattle Opera."

Anderson comes to the Opera as a senior executive and CPA with more than twenty years experience in corporate finance, investment management, banking, board development and strategic planning, and general management. Her previous positions include Chief Financial Officer and Controller for Casey Family Programs, and Vice-President & Controller for First Interstate Bank of Washington. (Casey, with \$3.4 billion in investment assets, was, during her tenure in the 1990s, the second-largest private operating foundation in the U.S., providing direct care and advocacy for youth in out-of-home placements nationwide.) For the last three years, Anderson has run a private consulting practice.

Anderson has been, and still is, highly active in the community. She has held several Board positions with Financial Executives International and currently serves on its National Leadership Board. She has also been involved with Seattle Rotary (1997-2002), with The Bank of New York as a Charter Member of the Client

Advisory Board (1995-2000), with the American Institute of CPAs, Washington Society of CPAs, Women CPAs of Seattle (President in 1988-89), and Leadership Tomorrow. Anderson has a long history with PONCHO, having held a number of volunteer positions from 1991 to 2005.

Asked why she decided to leave the for-profit world for Seattle Opera, Anderson replies, “Initially, I wasn’t looking for a job in the nonprofit sector. But when this job description from Seattle Opera was sent my way, and I was asked to suggest people who might be right for the job, I couldn’t resist imagining myself in the position and facing a whole new set of challenges. I applied! And now I am part of an enthusiastic, high-impact, arts management team devoted to presenting opera at its very best. It’s wonderful!”

Licensed in Washington State as a CPA in 1986, Anderson received her Education at the Berkeley Executive Program at the Haas School of Business, Pacific Coast Banking School at the University of Washington, and at Humboldt State University in California.

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Founded in 1963, Seattle Opera has developed into one of the leading opera companies in the United States. The company, which currently presents five productions a year, is recognized internationally for its theatrically compelling and musically accomplished performances. Seattle Opera’s summer presentations, particularly of Wagner’s *Ring des Nibelungen*, have been acclaimed often and widely as the Pacific Northwest’s premier cultural events.

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