

*For Immediate Release*



## **FORT WORTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

ROBERT SPANO, MUSIC DIRECTOR DESIGNATE

KEITH CERNY, Ph.D., PRESIDENT AND CEO

### **Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra Announces Passing of Esteemed Former President and CEO Ann Koonsman**

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**FORT WORTH, TX — June 23, 2021 —** The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra (FWSO) is saddened to announce the passing of longtime President and CEO Ann Koonsman on June 21, 2021, having surmounted significant health challenges in her final years. She served the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in multiple capacities over many years, as a violinist, VP of Development, and Executive Director of the FWSO in 1980, a position she held with distinction until her retirement in 2004. She returned to the FWSO in 2006 as President and CEO, a position she held until her second retirement in 2011.

Chairman of the Board Mercedes T. Bass stated, “On behalf of the FWSO board members, musicians, supporters and staff, we are heartbroken to hear of the passing of our beloved Ann Koonsman. As everyone knows, she was the best president the FWSO had. We are grateful for her passion, hard work and devotion in bringing the FWSO thus far through thick and thin! Ann will be missed but her memory will remain in our hearts and she will always be a part of the FWSO family.”

A brilliant and multi-talented individual, Ann Koonsman had an enormous impact on the FWSO’s growth from regional chamber orchestra to the nationally respected organization the FWSO is today. During her tenure, the FWSO became recognized as one of the most successful orchestras in its budget category with a \$12 million balanced budget, a 45-week concert season and a \$27 million endowment fund. Her administrative and fund-raising

expertise created opportunities for the orchestra to perform international tours, produce numerous recordings and commissioning projects, and transition into Bass Performance Hall when the venue opened in 1998. She also founded the Concerts In The Garden Summer Music Festival in 1990 which continues to be a summer staple for families throughout the Metroplex more than thirty years later.

Among Ann Koonsman's many exceptional leadership qualities was her ability to collaborate. Her successful partnership with John Giordano, Sr. (now Music Director Emeritus of the FWSO) allowed for the dramatic improvement of artistic quality within the ensemble. She continued to embody the spirit of collaboration in her work with Music Director Miguel Harth-Bedoya (now Music Director Laureate) as he ushered in yet another era of rapid artistic growth for the orchestra.

Ann Koonsman's Memorial Service will be held on **Friday, June 25 at 1:00 PM at Broadway Baptist Church at 305 West Broadway Avenue in Fort Worth.**

### **About Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra**

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra is deeply committed to uniting its community through performance, education, and outreach, reaching an audience of more than 200,000 annually. Since its beginnings in 1912, the FWSO has been an essential thread in the city's cultural fabric and the very foundation of Fort Worth's performing arts. As the principal resident company of the acoustically superb Nancy Lee and Perry R. Bass Performance Hall, the Orchestra performs a full season of concerts featuring internationally acclaimed guest artists and works by living composers. The Orchestra performs and partners with the Texas Ballet Theater, Fort Worth Opera, The Cliburn, and Performing Arts Fort Worth. Each summer at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, the FWSO presents *Concerts in the Garden* – a series of family-friendly concerts that has become a city-wide tradition. Additionally, the orchestra hosts an annual Festival of Orchestras, providing an opportunity for non-professional orchestras across the state of Texas to perform in Bass Performance Hall. The FWSO keeps exceptional musical experiences at the heart of its community. After all—life is better with music! For more information, visit [FWSymphony.org](http://FWSymphony.org).

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