

Playwrights Foundation

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Amy Mueller To Step Down As Artistic Director Of Playwrights Foundation Following The 42nd Annual Bay Area Playwrights Festival, July 19-28, 2019

4.23.2019 / San Francisco - Playwrights Foundation announces that Artistic Director Amy Mueller has decided to step down, after nearly two decades of leadership, following the annual Bay Area Playwrights Festival, July 19-28, 2019. A national search for her successor will begin in May.

“I am so grateful and proud of what we’ve accomplished over the past 19 years,” says Amy Mueller. “I’ve been thrilled to witness the success of so many of the brilliant playwrights we’ve worked with these past two decades, and celebrate with them as they have risen to prominence. I realize that the time is right for me to move on.”

When Mueller took the helm in the fall of 2000, Playwrights Foundation — which was founded by Robert Woodruff in 1976 with the first Bay Area Playwrights Festival, featuring playwright Sam Shepard — had the annual festival as its only program. Building on the legacy of her predecessors, Mueller expanded PF’s size and scope to year-round programs and services.

Under her leadership, Mueller has identified hundreds of diverse and promising new voices in American theater. Notable playwrights she has worked with include: Katori Hall, Rajiv Joseph, Marcus Gardley, Aaron Loeb, Lauren Gunderson, Lauren Yee, Dominique Morisseau, Chris Chen, Jackie Sibblies Drury, Sam Hunter, George Brant, Annie Baker, Liz Duffy Adams, and more recently such up-and-coming artists as Tarrance Chisholm, Geetha Reddy, Dipika Guha, Kristiana Rae Colón and Jonathan Spector (winner 2019 Will Glickman Award for best new play). Many of these and hundreds of other artists were able to launch their careers through Playwrights Foundation. Writers nurtured by Mueller have gone on to win every award in the theater including the Obie, the Pulitzer, the MacArthur Genius, and the Glickman Awards, among many others.

“Amy’s impact on Playwrights Foundation and the field of new play development cannot be overstated,” remarks Board President Markham Miller. ***“She has transformed the organization into playwright accelerator and new play incubator that is regarded as one of the top in the nation. She has identified and championed many significant writers and artists. Amy will be leaving Playwrights Foundation with a noteworthy record of growth and influence.”***

During her tenure, Mueller significantly enhanced Playwright Foundation’s signature program, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, quadrupling attendance, attracting national attention, and

establishing it as a key destination among theater professionals for identifying new work. She launched highly impactful new programs — the Resident Playwrights Initiative, the Rough Readings Series, and the Producing Partnerships Initiative — aimed at more deeply supporting the careers of local, emergent and mid-career writers. During this period, Playwrights Foundation has been awarded two Will Glickman awards, a Lillian Hellman Award, a Venturous Theatre Fund Award and an Artistic Legacy Award from Theatre Bay Area.

Just a few of these local writers include Marcus Gardley, who Playwrights Foundation (PF) first worked with while he was still a student and has risen to national prominence; Lauren Gunderson, who PF worked with early in her career, is now the most produced playwright in the country; Lauren Yee and Chris Chen, who first worked at PF in 2007 while they were students, giving them their first professional workshops, now have productions in major regional and New York theaters. All have won multiple awards for their work.

“Amy has always been a fierce and dedicated advocate for playwrights of all levels, including me in the early part of my career,” remarks playwright Lauren Gunderson. ***“She gave me the boost of new play development and the advocacy of a superfan when I needed it most. It made a huge difference to me, as it has to so many writers across the country. I’m so grateful to her.”***

In announcing her decision to the board, Mueller expressed a desire to pursue new projects. *“I’ve been pondering when to move on and pursue my other passions in the theater as a director and producer for a while, and this feels like the right time.”* As a result of Mueller’s vision and impact, Playwrights Foundation has never been better positioned for a new, forward-thinking leader to take the reins and provide a new generation of dramatists a platform and nurturing environment in which to grow.

“We are excited about the opportunity this transition presents to bring new energy and artistic vision to Playwrights Foundation,” says Board President Miller. ***“We are also looking forward to celebrating Amy and everything Playwrights Foundation has achieved under her leadership. Our milestone event this summer – the 42nd Annual Bay Area Playwrights Festival in July and our Cocktails with a Playwright benefit in June – will allow us and the community to honor Amy and wish her continued success.”***

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AMY MUELLER has spearheaded the growth and development of Playwrights Foundation during her nearly 20-year tenure, transforming it into a highly vaunted national new play center with significant impact on the field. She has personally facilitated the development of hundreds of plays, and accelerated the careers of as many emerging and mid-career playwrights who have gone on to shift the landscape of American Theatre, winning national acclaim, awards and visibility. She has also won many awards for her directorial work, including *...and Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi* by Marcus Gardley and *Let My Enemy Live Long!* By Tanya Shaffer,

winning multiple Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards, Glickman Awards, the President's Commission on Arts and Humanities, and a TCG national fellowship.

PLAYWRIGHTS FOUNDATION

Founded in 1976, Playwrights Foundation is today widely recognized as one of the top new play incubators in the U.S., dedicated to the creative development and career acceleration of diverse contemporary playwrights. Serving emerging and mid-career playwrights, from the Bay Area and around the country, PF has, for over 4 decades, identified over 500 exceptional writers early in their careers and given them space, time and professional artistic collaborators to explore new theatrical ideas free from the pressures of the marketplace. Playwrights it has worked with have won every award in the theater including the Pulitzer, the Obie, the National Critics Circle Award, and many more. In 2017, on its 40th Anniversary, Playwrights Foundation was recognized with a Legacy Award for its substantial impact on the field. PF has received two Glickman Awards for best new play to premiere in the Bay Area through its Producing Partnership Initiative. Among the many PF-developed works that have premiered across the country, are Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop*, Rajiv Joseph's *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, Jihae Park's *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*, Lauren Gunderson's *The Revolutionists*, Lauren Yee's *King of the Yees*, Bennett Fisher's *Damascus*, Mike Lew's *Teenage Dick*, and Mona Mansour's *We Swim, We Talk, We Go To War*, to name only a few.

For photos go to: [Photos](#) and <https://playwrightsfoundation.org/about/press-room/>

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42nd Annual Bay Area Playwrights Festival, July 19-28, 2019 @ Potrero Stage - The premiere festival for new works on the west coast, runs July 19th - 28th returning to the Potrero Stage, 1695 18th St, San Francisco, CA 94107. Over 700 scripts were submitted for this year's festival. The final six talented emerging playwrights from across the country will each have two readings of a new work; presented by the Bay Area's top acting talent. Final playwrights will be announced in April and tickets for the festival will go on sale in June.

[Cocktails With A Playwright](https://playwrightsfoundation.org/cocktails-with-a-playwright/): A benefit for Playwrights Foundation, June 8, 2019 @ San Francisco Center for the Book - honoring playwrights Marcus Gardley, Lauren Yee & Kristiana Rae Colón, and outgoing Artistic Director Amy Mueller
<https://playwrightsfoundation.org/cocktails-with-a-playwright/>