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## **Navy Pier's New Associate Board Advances with Executive Team in Place**

**CHICAGO** – Navy Pier, Chicago's iconic cultural destination, today announced that its new Associate Board, comprised of 32 distinguished mid-career professionals from various industries, has named its executive leadership team: **DeRondal Bevly, Dan Gibbons, Syreeta Harris Strickland, Nekesa Josey and Lilly Athamanah**. As the Associate Board enters its inaugural year, these five executive members will lead the charge in supporting the Pier's mission through fundraising events, volunteer service and professional engagement, in addition to serving as ambassadors for the People's Pier.

"The formation of the Navy Pier Associate Board comes at a significant time in the Pier's history, and we look forward to the support, insight and contribution of the newly appointed Associate Board executive team as the Pier continues to evolve in its second century," said **Navy Pier President and CEO Marilyn Gardner**

"The Navy Pier Associate Board leadership team will call on the talents of this dynamic group of individuals, committed to serving as ambassadors, to propel the mission and vision of one of the pre-eminent cultural destinations in the Midwest," says **Navy Pier Associate Board Co-chair DeRondal Bevly**. "We look forward to using our combined years of experience and respective connections in the civic, corporate and philanthropic landscape of Chicago to share our enthusiasm about the Pier and garner support of Navy Pier's community-serving initiatives."

The Associate Board executive team will spearhead fundraising projects, including Navy Pier's *Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest* Preview Party, benefitting the Pier's free public programming.

"Supporting the growth of such an iconic cultural destination is very exciting. Navy Pier has undergone an incredible transformation in the past few years," said **Navy Pier Associate Board Co-chair Dan Gibbons**. "It really is an honor to be a part of a consortium focused on advancing the mission and values of one of Chicago's most historic, important and lively institutions."

DeRondal Bevly will serve as Navy Pier Associate Board Co-chair. Bevly is the Founder and Managing Director of RubyRose Strategies and brings more than a decade of combined professional and philanthropic experience. Deeply passionate about philanthropy and engaged in Chicago's civic community, Bevly is a Leadership Greater Chicago Fellow, an organization that cultivates and unites Chicago's foremost business, public and civic leaders, and currently serves on the boards of Forefront, Public Narrative and as a Partner with Social Venture Partners Chicago. Bevly earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Economics from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Dan Gibbons will serve as Navy Pier Associate Board Co-chair. Gibbons currently serves as Vice President of Tur Partners and is also the Director of Symposia for the Academy of Achievement. Gibbons currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Magnificent Mile Association, the New Coast Foundation and the Chicago Fire Department Foundation, the Auxiliary Board of the John G. Shedd Aquarium, the Chicago Ideas Week Co-Op, the Young Leaders Board of the American Ireland Fund, and the Board of Regents for St. Ignatius College Prep. Gibbons also acts as an advisor to the

Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the Great Lakes Cities Initiative, and numerous Chicago-based startup companies and non-profit organizations. Gibbons received a B.A. in Political Science from Marquette University, is currently pursuing his Executive MBA at the University of Notre Dame.

Syreeta Harris Strickland will serve as Navy Pier Associate Board Vice Chair. Strickland is the Director of Investment Banking Marketing at William Blair and leads the company's Investment Banking group globally. Strickland is a founding member of the Chicago Associates Board and serves on marketing committee for Blessings in a Backpack, a non-profit organization that provides food for elementary school children across the country that are at risk of going hungry. Strickland also serves on the Advisory Board for Common Threads, an organization focused on educating low-income children on the importance of nutrition and physical well-being, empowering them to be agents of change for healthier families, schools and communities. Strickland earned her BS in marketing and an MBA from the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University.

Nekesa Josey will serve as Navy Pier Associate Board Treasurer. Josey is an Associate in Mesirow Financial Public Finance Group who provides quantitative analysis and execution support for municipal clients. Josey currently serves on the Big Shoulders Fund Chairmen's Advisory Council where she led the stock market program tutor recruitment drive. Previously, Josey served as President of the Chicago Child Care Society's Junior Board, where she worked with the agency's senior staff and board of directors to create the inaugural junior board bylaws and design board program for 30 Chicago area young professionals. Josey was awarded the Emerging Young Professional for Kosovo U.S. Department of State Fellowship. Josey has a B.A. in political science and pursued post graduate studies at the University of Chicago.

Lilly Athamanah will serve as Navy Pier Associate Board Secretary. Athamanah is a Communications Specialist at the Joyce Foundation where she manages strategy and implementation of digital and design assets. Athamanah actively volunteers as a writing and resume coach for Posse Scholars through the Posse Foundation's Chicago chapter, helping students gain skills in critical analysis, argumentative writing, and grammar before beginning their first year in college. She is also a Next Chapter Associate at the Newberry Library in Chicago, a member of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy and the Chicago Community Trust's Asian Giving Circle. Athamanah is also the recipient of the Posse Foundation's Full-Tuition Leadership Scholarship to attend Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. She graduated in 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies.

Navy Pier Associate Board members were recruited and vetted by Navy Pier Board of Directors, executive leadership and senior management to ensure a diverse and talented mix of individuals who share a passion and enthusiasm for the Pier's vision. Appointed Associate Board members are expected to serve a one-year term at minimum.

[Click here](#) to view the full list of current Navy Pier Associate Board of Directors.

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### **About Navy Pier**

Located on Lake Michigan, Navy Pier is one of the top-attended nonprofit cultural destinations in the Midwest, stretching more than six city blocks and welcoming more than 9 million guests annually. Originally opened in 1916 as a shipping and recreation facility, this Chicago landmark showcases more than 50 acres of parks, restaurants, attractions, retail shops, sightseeing and dining cruise boats, exposition facilities and more. In 2018, Navy Pier continues to usher in its second century with ongoing pier-wide redevelopment efforts – including the *Fifth Third Bank Family Pavilion*, *Peoples Energy Welcome Pavilion*, 220-room hotel and more – in addition to free, year-round arts and cultural programming designed to inspire, educate and connect communities across the city and globe. For more information, visit [www.navy Pier.org](http://www.navy Pier.org) or download the free Navy Pier app for Android and iOS device users.

### **Navy Pier Mission Statement**

*Navy Pier is the People's Pier, Chicago's lakefront treasure, welcoming all and offering dynamic and eclectic experiences through partnerships and programs that inspire discovery and wonder.*