



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SMYAL Appoints Five New Board Members and New Board Leadership

WASHINGTON, DC- Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders (SMYAL) announced today the appointment of five new board members who began their first terms in February 2023. With the addition of these new members, SMYAL's Board of Directors now consists of 17 seats.

The new SMYAL Board Members are:

- Sharon Davis, Partner at Rothwell, Figg, Ernst & Manbeck
- Ginna Goodenow, CEO of Dragonfly Central, Incorporated
- Chelsea Ruediger, Founder of CMR Consulting
- Edward Sepe, M.D., Attending Physician at Children's National Pediatricians and Associates
- Judson Wood, Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at Cambridge Associates

In addition to approving the expansion and new members, SMYAL's Board of Directors elected new officers including:

- Lamar Braithwaite, Chair
- Billy Fettweis, Vice-Chair
- Milla Sanes, Treasurer
- Lisa Manley, Secretary

Prior to the start of the 2023 Board term, SMYAL's previous Board Chair, Rob Cogorno, indicated that he would be stepping down after serving one term beginning in 2020. Cogorno joined the board in 2015 and as Chair stewarded the organization through their recent Executive Director search and leadership transition. Cogorno will remain on the board as the Outgoing Chair.

Lamar Braithwaite, who has served on SMYAL's Board since 2019, was elected as the new Chair. "I am honored to be chosen to serve as SMYAL's Board Chair, and I know we are all excited to help SMYAL write the next chapter in its amazing history," Braithwaite shared. "Our new and existing board members bring exceptional skills, relationships, and perspectives to the table. I also want to thank Rob Cogorno for his steadfast leadership through some of SMYAL's biggest changes and challenges in recent years."

SMYAL's Executive Director, Erin Whelan added, "As SMYAL has grown over the last several years, it is important for our board to grow and diversify in order to continue to expand our perspectives and provide new insight into our work. I am excited to welcome our new board members as each one of them brings a unique expertise and voice to furthering our mission of supporting LGBTQ+ youth."

SMYAL (Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders) supports and empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in the Washington, DC, metropolitan region. Through youth leadership, SMYAL creates opportunities for LGBTQ youth to build self-confidence, develop critical life skills, and engage their peers and community through service and advocacy. Committed to social change, SMYAL builds, sustains, and advocates for programs, policies, and services that LGBTQ youth need as they grow into adulthood.

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