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THE FLORIDA ORCHESTRA NAMES JULIE BAKER AS VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — The Florida Orchestra has named Julie Baker as its new Vice President of Development, welcoming a nationally respected fundraising leader with more than two decades of experience advancing orchestras, higher education and international nonprofits.

Baker joins the orchestra at a time of real momentum, following several years of fundraising success, expanding community support and growing investment in the orchestra's artistic and education programs throughout Tampa Bay.

Most recently, Baker served as Chief Development Officer for Pencils of Promise, a global education nonprofit. She led the organization's national fundraising strategy while overseeing its cross-functional development and marketing team. Under her leadership, the organization strengthened major gift and foundation support, expanded donor engagement and achieved record fundraising growth.

Before that, Baker served as Vice President of Development for the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, where she guided fundraising during the Covid pandemic. She helped the organization increase contributed revenue, secure seven-figure gifts and strengthen both annual and endowment support during one of the most challenging periods in the performing arts industry.

"Julie is exactly the kind of leader we were looking for as we continue building our momentum," said President & CEO Ignacio Barrón Viela. "She shares our belief that a great orchestra belongs at the center of its community. The Florida Orchestra is in a strong position right now, with growing support across Tampa Bay and exciting conversations about the orchestra's long-term future. That includes our search for a permanent home base that can support our performances, education programs and community initiatives for generations to come. We're confident about the future and the smooth transition ahead as Julie joins our leadership team."

Baker said she was drawn to The Florida Orchestra because of both its artistic quality and its deep connection to the community it has served for nearly six decades.

"I've always believed orchestras can play an essential role in the life of a community. Not just through concerts, but through education and shared experiences that bring people together," Baker said. "The Florida Orchestra already means so much to this community, and it's clear there's tremendous excitement about where the organization is headed next. I'm honored to join the team at such an important moment and look forward to building meaningful relationships and partnerships with donors, patrons and community leaders across Tampa Bay. Together, we can continue growing the support that will help shape the orchestra's future."

Baker's career also includes leadership roles in higher education and the arts, including Western Illinois University and organizations such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Elgin Symphony Orchestra and Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestras.

A classically trained soprano, Baker began singing in church at age 6 and continued private voice study and performance through 2019, appearing in operatic productions and as a featured soloist with multiple ensembles. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in music business with a minor in marketing from Western Illinois University.

Baker succeeds longtime development leader Susana Weymouth, whose tenure helped position The Florida Orchestra for continued growth and long-term stability, including securing the largest single gift in the orchestra's history.

Baker will begin her role with The Florida Orchestra on June 1.

About The Florida Orchestra

The Florida Orchestra's mission is to INSPIRE | EDUCATE | UNITE to build community through the power of music. As Tampa Bay's premier performing arts institution — and the largest professional orchestra in Florida — TFO is led by internationally acclaimed Music Director Michael Francis and features 70 full-time musicians and conductors. Now celebrating its 58th season, TFO is widely recognized as one of the most vibrant and innovative orchestras in the nation. Each year, the orchestra reaches more than 150,000 people through more than 100 world-class performances and robust education and community impact programs across Tampa Bay. Its diverse programming spans classical masterworks, popular and film music, family-friendly concerts and collaborations with global artists. Beyond the concert hall, TFO brings music to schools, youth and senior centers and underserved communities, ensuring access to the arts for all. As a cornerstone of the region's cultural landscape, TFO plays a vital role in strengthening Tampa Bay's creative and economic vitality by attracting audiences, tourism and related business activity.
***For tickets and information**: FloridaOrchestra.org.*
***To donate now:** FloridaOrchestra.org/donate*

The Florida Orchestra is a non-profit 501(c)3 EIN: 59-1223691 CH#1830.