



-- For Immediate Release--

The Advocates for Human Rights' Executive Director, Robin Phillips, Announces Transition

Minneapolis, MN (May 23, 2024)

The Advocates for Human Rights has announced that Executive Director Robin Phillips will be retiring from the role at the end of the year. Robin has served as executive director since 2002, following seven years as founding director of the organization's Women's Human Rights Program.

The Advocates, which celebrated its 40th Anniversary last year by recognizing the contributions of its board, staff and volunteers over the decades, enters the next decade stronger than it has ever been. The Advocates' board chair, Karen Evans, noted, "Under Robin's leadership, we have grown the organization's professional staff and resources, and we now serve more than 3000 clients, mobilize more than 1500 volunteers, and work with scores of partners in our home community and around the globe each year."

The Advocates' extraordinary model leverages volunteer professionals to deliver millions of dollars in human rights work. The Advocates has been instrumental in building the culture of human rights in Minnesota and in bringing our knowledge and leadership to the international human rights movement at the United Nations and in countries around the world.

"The Advocates for Human Rights is rightly recognized as a world leading NGO, whose deep roots in the Twin Cities have shaped its values and work ethic and whose global reach is simply unmistakable," said Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Regents Professor and Faculty Director of the Human Rights Center at the University of Minnesota Law School. "The "Advocates" has been the by-word for rigor, compassion, integrity and painstaking human rights work. The local and the global are inextricably intertwined for this organization, and one compliments and reinforces the other. The Advocates makes its human rights presence felt in a multitude of ways, and it is not only an essential human rights NGO but an indispensable human rights NGO".

The Advocates also provides life-saving immigration legal help to thousands of people throughout the Upper Midwest, including people fleeing persecution and trafficking, unaccompanied children, and people in detention. It has taken national leadership in advocating for immigration policy that reflects fundamental human rights principles. Matthew Webster, chair of the American Immigration Lawyers Association's Minnesota/Dakotas chapter, describes the organization as, "an invaluable partner in the struggle for immigrant rights by providing a safety net of legal services to immigrants and by mobilizing the legal community to support vulnerable clients seeking protection and new beginnings in the United States."

The organization will be lead through an interim period by the board chair and the senior management team, while the board conducts a national search for its new executive director. Michele Garnett McKenzie, Rosalyn Park, and Jennifer Prestholdt, who will serve as co-executive directors, are extraordinary leaders and human rights professionals with more than 75 years' combined experience in the field. We thank Robin for nearly 30 years of

leadership and celebrate the dedicated staff of experienced human rights professionals who are well-equipped to take on the challenges of the next 40 years.

About The Advocates for Human Rights

Founded in 1983, The Advocates for Human Rights is an independent, nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organization based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Advocates for Human Rights works in our home community and with partners around the world to ensure access to immigration justice, end violence against women, abolish the death penalty, and protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ people. We believe that everyone has the power to advance human rights, and that by engaging volunteers in hands-on human rights work, we can accomplish critical research and advocacy while transforming volunteers into advocates for human rights. The Advocates' mission is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law.

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