



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Shawn Taylor Kaminski, [skaminski@directwomen.org](mailto:skaminski@directwomen.org), 708-244-9006; or Sheri Singer, [sheri@singercomm.com](mailto:sheri@singercomm.com), 703-346-7111

**NEW DirectWomen's 2025 Board Institute Class Announced**  
*Board Institute Positions Women Lawyers to Serve on Corporate Boards*

NEW YORK (February 21, 2025) — Women lawyers have a unique blend of legal knowledge and business skills, which makes them effective independent corporate directors. To this end, [DirectWomen](https://www.directwomen.org) has announced its NEW 2025 Board Institute Class. DirectWomen's annual Board Institute program is designed to position board-ready women lawyers to serve on corporate boards of directors. Identified through a rigorous search and selection process, these women hail from preeminent public and private companies, law firms, and academia.

"We are delighted to welcome this new class to our Board Institute," said Shawn Taylor Kaminski, Executive Director of DirectWomen. "We are proud of our 286 Board Institute alumnae who have held more than 208 corporate board seats since DirectWomen's inception in 2007."

Empirical studies\* specifically indicate that lawyer-directors' professional judgment, knowledge of corporate governance, legal expertise, and familiarity with regulation and risk management greatly improve the value and operation of the company.

"This class of highly qualified board-ready women lawyers are business executives and strategic thought leaders," said Lily Yan Hughes, Chair, DirectWomen Board of Directors. "They represent a wide range of industries and experiences and will make excellent independent corporate directors."

Over the course of the program, the new Board Institute class will meet with a faculty of CEOs, C-suite and search firm executives, and directors of public companies. The Board Institute faculty will discuss relevant and challenging issues facing corporate directors today and strategies for acquiring a board seat.

DirectWomen's Board Institute is chaired by Professor Hillary A. Sale, Agnes Williams Sesquicentennial Professor of Leadership and Corporate Governance and Professor of Management, Georgetown University; Director, Cboe U.S. Securities Exchanges, Cboe Futures Exchange, Cboe SEF, and Legg Mason Closed End Funds; Advisory Board Member, Foundation Press.

Members of the 2025 DirectWomen Board Institute class include:

**Christine J. Chao**

General Counsel and Interim CEO, Foremost Group  
New York, NY

**Samantha Hale Cripsin**

Firmwide Corporate Department Chair and Partner, Baker Botts L.L.P.  
Dallas, TX

**Angelica Espinosa**

Senior Vice President and Chief Legal, Compliance and Corporate Affairs Officer, Portland General Electric  
Portland, OR

**Jessica A. Garascia**

Senior Vice President, General Counsel, Chief Administrative Officer, and Secretary, AAR CORP.  
Chicago, IL

**Kendall Handler**

Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, and Secretary, IAC, Inc.  
New York, NY

**Christie (Chris) Hill**

Former Chief Legal Officer, Aristocrat Leisure Limited  
Las Vegas, NV

**Tanya M. Jaeger de Foras**

Chief Legal Officer, Corporate Secretary, and Chief Compliance Officer, Ingredion Incorporated  
Westchester, IL

**Jennifer A. Johnson**

General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, International Flavors and Fragrances  
New York, NY

**Natasha G. Kohne**

Partner, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP  
San Francisco, CA and Abu Dhabi, UAE

**Meredith M. Lackey**

Chief Compliance Officer, Southern Company  
Atlanta, GA

**Kimberly Banks MacKay**

Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary, West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc.  
Exton, PA

**Gwyn Goodson McNeal**

Executive Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, Corporate Secretary, Extra Space Storage Inc.  
Salt Lake City, UT

**Karna Nisewaner**

Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary  
Cadence Design Systems, Inc.  
San Jose, CA

**Amy L. Perry**

Former Executive Vice President of Strategic Development and General Counsel, NuStar Energy L.P.  
San Antonio, TX

**Z. Scott**

President, Chicago State University  
Chicago, IL

**Wanji J. Walcott**

Chief Legal and Business Affairs Officer, Pinterest  
Chicago, IL

**Lynn Watkins-Asiyanbi**

Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative and Legal Officer, Board Secretary, CECO Environmental Corp.  
Chicago, IL and Dallas, TX

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**About DirectWomen**

DirectWomen's mission is to increase the representation of women lawyers on corporate boards. To this end, DirectWomen identifies leading women lawyers who provide the experience, independence, and business judgment required for corporate board effectiveness. Through its various programs, DirectWomen develops and positions women attorney leaders for board service. It also serves as a resource for companies seeking qualified board candidates. Direct Women is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization. For more information, go to [www.directwomen.org](http://www.directwomen.org)

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\*Links to studies include:

<https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2276&context=facpub>

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3537883](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3537883)

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/ecpe/why-diversity-matters-women-on-boards-of-directors/>

<https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2022/03/05/women-in-the-boardroom-2022-update/>