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Souls Grown Deep Foundation and Community Partnership Elects Lola C. West as Board Chair

May 24, 2023 (Atlanta, GA) – Souls Grown Deep Foundation and Community Partnership announced today that **Lola C. West** has been elected chair of its [Board of Directors](#). West has served on the board since 2019.

With more than 20 years of experience in financial advising and fundraising, West has infused her passion and advocacy for social justice, racial equity, and gender rights to create spaces of opportunity, helping progressive institutions build a vision for the future. She is a co-founder of leading Black-owned, multi-racial, gender diverse, independent advisory and wealth management firm Westfuller Advisors, where she currently serves as Chairwoman and Chief Culture Officer. In her previous career as an event producer and fundraiser, she worked with clients including The Studio Museum of Harlem, NAACP, and President Nelson Mandela, leading the United States fundraising strategy for his successful election in 1994. An active philanthropist, West was a founding member of the Council for African American Art at the Brooklyn Museum and serves on boards of the New York Women's Foundation, Donors of Color Network, and The New 3Rs. She holds a BA in psychology from Brooklyn College and a master's in urban planning from Hunter College.

"Lola's contributions to the Board over the past four years have been invaluable, and we look forward to the perspective she will bring as leader of our organization," said **Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, President of Souls Grown Deep Foundation and Community Partnership**. "Her dedication to philanthropy and expertise in mission-aligned finance will stand Souls Grown Deep in good stead as we continue to expand our work in impact investing, economic empowerment, and community development throughout the South."

West succeeds previous chair Mary Margaret Pettway, a fourth-generation Gee's Bend quilter who has been a board member since 2017 and chair since 2018. Pettway will continue to serve on the board, and is being recognized henceforth with the title Chair Emerita. Comprising distinguished artists, scholars,

curators, activists, and philanthropists, Souls Grown Deep's Board of Directors serve both the Foundation and the Community Partnership, advancing the dual goals of canonical recognition for Black artists from the South and racial, social, and economic justice in their communities.

The Foundation works with major museums around the world to promote the recognition of Black artists through acquisitions, exhibitions, public programs, and scholarship. Current exhibitions include:

- [*Souls Grown Deep like the Rivers: Black Artists from the American South*](#) at the Royal Academy of Arts in London (on view through June 18): SGD's first international curatorial partnership, SGD curator Raina Lampkins-Fielder and Royal Academy Secretary and Chief Executive Axel Rüger have curated an exhibition drawing on SGD's collection to showcase unique Black artistic traditions and modes of visual storytelling that developed in the South throughout the twentieth century, with 64 works by 34 artists in media ranging from quilts and sculptures to paintings, drawings, and reliefs, representing the first time many of these works will be shown in Europe, as well as the first museum exhibition focusing on the SGD collection outside the United States.
- [*Called to Create: Black Artists of the American South*](#) at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (recently extended through December 31): The exhibition features 40 works acquired from SGD in 2020, on view at the National Gallery for the first time; of the 21 Black artists whose works were included in the acquisition, only one (Thornton Dial) was already represented in the museum's collection.

Souls Grown Deep is committed to investing its endowment in alignment with its values and mission, including via impact funds supporting Black-owned creative enterprises. It has established collaborations for economic opportunity with organizations including Upstart Co-Lab, Nest, and Artists Rights Society, as well as facilitating equitable partnerships between the Gee's Bend quilters and Etsy, Greg Lauren, Paskho, Macy's, and other brands.

The Souls Grown Deep [Board of Directors](#) includes:

- Dr. Maxwell L. Anderson, *President*
- Lola C. West, *Chair*; Co-Founder, Chairwoman, and Chief Culture Officer at Westfuller Advisors
- Sanford Biggers, Artist
- Diedrick Brackens, Artist
- Linley Jones, Board-Certified Professional Liability and Ethics Lawyer
- Valerie Cassel Oliver, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
- Mary Margaret Pettway, Fourth-Generation Gee's Bend Quilter
- Michael Sellman, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Calatrava Grace Corporation
- Jacquelyn Serwer, Former Chief Curator of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Amy Sherald, Artist

About the Souls Grown Deep Foundation & Community Partnership

Souls Grown Deep advocates the inclusion of Black artists from the South in the canon of American art history, and fosters economic empowerment, racial and social justice, and educational advancement in the communities that gave rise to these artists. Founded by Atlanta collector William S. Arnett in 2010, Souls Grown Deep derives its name from a 1921 poem by Langston Hughes (1902–1967) titled *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, the last line of which is "My soul has grown deep like the rivers."

Souls Grown Deep Foundation stewards the largest and foremost collection of works by Black artists from the Southern United States, originally encompassing some 1,300 works by more than 160 artists, two-thirds of whom are women. To date, more than 500 works from the Foundation's collection have been placed in 32 museums around the world through the Souls Grown Deep Collection Transfer Program. The Foundation advances its mission through collection transfers, exhibitions, education, public programs, and publications.

Souls Grown Deep Community Partnership pursues racial, social, and economic justice by grant-making, values-aligned investments, underwriting projects, advocacy, and forging collaborations with a variety of like-minded civic organizations, businesses, and nonprofits.

For more information, visit soulsgrowndeep.org.

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