

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BRETT HENDRIE LEAVING HOT DOCS FOR NEW OPPORTUNITY WITH UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Toronto, Canada, February 22, 2021 – Hot Docs has announced that executive director Brett Hendrie will be leaving the organization in late March to assume a new position at University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. Hendrie's departure comes after 20 years with Hot Docs, his last eight years as its executive director. Having successfully steered the organization through the uncertainties of the past year, and having established a solid financial foundation to support it until normal operations can resume, Hendrie will take his leave once programming and logistics are finalized for the upcoming online Festival, April 29-May 9. To ensure a seamless transition, Hendrie will be providing strategic advice and support to Hot Docs' leadership until the end of the event.

"It has been an incredible privilege to be a part of this inspiring organization for twenty years, and an honour to advance its mission to champion documentary films and filmmakers," said **Brett Hendrie**. "I am deeply thankful to the innumerable colleagues, board members and partners with whom I collaborated, and am so proud of what we've accomplished together. Hot Docs' reach and its capacity to support documentary's vibrant voices have never been greater, and I'm confident it will take its ambitions to new heights and deepen its impact with audiences, filmmakers and the documentary community."

"On behalf of my co-chair, Robin Mirsky, and the entire board of directors, I want to thank Brett for his immeasurable contributions and leadership over the years which have led to Hot Docs' incredible growth and success," said **Lalita Krishna**, co-chair of Hot Docs Board of Directors. "Brett's steady hand, thoughtfulness, energy and enthusiasm for our mission will be sorely missed. Speaking as a filmmaker, the opportunities he has spearheaded for the next generation of documentary storytellers have been invaluable and greatly appreciated."

"It has been a personal career highlight to work alongside Brett for the past two decades," said **Chris McDonald**, president of Hot Docs. "Among the many amazing accomplishments he leaves us—more engaged audiences, more support for filmmakers and richer ties to our documentary community—his tireless work to lead us through the uncertainties of this past year may be the most remarkable. He leaves us on a solid foundation and with great optimism and enthusiasm for the opportunities that lie ahead."

Under Hendrie's tenure, Hot Docs Festival grew to record audiences of 228,000 and the value of filmmaker awards and prizes reached \$305,000, including the annual \$50,000 Rogers Audience Award. He spearheaded signature Festival programs, including Big Ideas, presented by Scotia Wealth Management, which features marquee guests and filmmakers, and DocX, which showcases VR and other new interactive formats. Hot Docs' wildly popular Docs For Schools education program also grew exponentially under his tenure, expanding year-round and to multiple provinces outside Ontario to reach over 128,000 students annually.

For filmmakers, Hendrie launched the Canadian Storytellers Project, supported by Netflix, which offers mentorship and training opportunities for Canadian filmmakers from underrepresented communities through the Doc Accelerator lab and the national Doc Ignite program. Within Hot Docs' portfolio of production funds, he established CrossCurrents Canada Doc Fund, supported by Netflix, and CrossCurrents International Doc Fund, supported by R&M Lang Foundation and Panicaro

Hot Docs is a charitable, not-for-profit organization committed to advancing the art of documentary and supporting opportunities for independent filmmakers.

Foundation, which both offer grants to filmmakers from underrepresented communities. Hendrie also spearheaded Hot Docs' commissions, including *In the Name of All Canadians* (2017) and the recently announced *Citizen Minutes*, and forged partnerships with Scotiabank on *Hockey 24* and Samsung Canada on their Big Steps program.

Under Hendrie's leadership, Hot Docs expanded its profile in the digital space, promoting Hot Docs Collection alumni films to national audiences through partnerships with iTunes, Crave, Rogers on Demand and CMF's Encore+. Last year, in the early months of the ongoing pandemic, Hendrie led Hot Docs' pivot to an online public festival and industry conference and market—being the first major Canadian festival to do so—and struck an innovative partnership with CBC that saw the world premieres of seven official selections broadcast nationally as part of Hot Docs at Home on CBC.

Hot Docs Board of Directors will begin its search for a new executive director this month with applications from both internal and external candidates being encouraged. Hot Docs' former executive director and current president, Chris McDonald, will assume sole chief executive responsibilities until a successful candidate is found.

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[Hot Docs](#), North America's largest documentary festival, conference and market, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Hot Docs will present its 28th annual edition online from April 29-May 9, 2021, during which a full roster of industry conference sessions, market programs and networking events will be held for Canadian and international delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker, Distribution Rendezvous and The Doc Shop. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar production fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free program Docs For Schools. Hot Docs owns and programs the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, a century-old landmark located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood and the world's first and largest documentary cinema, and operates Hot Docs at Home streaming platform.

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