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## HOT DOCS NAMES EMMY AWARD-WINNING DOC AND NEWS EXECUTIVE MARIE NELSON ITS NEW PRESIDENT

**Toronto, ON** – Hot Docs Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Marie Nelson has been named the organization's new president. Starting June 1, Ms. Nelson will assume responsibility for the strategic leadership and management of the annual Hot Docs festival, conference and market, the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema and the organization's year-round industry and public facing initiatives and activities. The announcement comes at the opening of industry week at the 30th annual Hot Docs Festival, April 27-May 7, where over 1,800 delegates from more than 40 countries have gathered for a dynamic slate of networking and market events and Toronto audiences are flocking to screenings of over 200 outstanding documentaries.

"Marie is a dynamic leader with a proven track record of supporting filmmakers, growing and diversifying audiences and lifting powerful and yet often unheard voices into national discussion, which makes her ideally suited to lead Hot Docs into its next chapter," said **Lalita Krishna**, co-chair of Hot Docs Board of Directors.

"She is well-known and respected in the international industry for her passion and commitment, along with her sharp insights and strategic skill at establishing organizational frameworks that empower original storytelling," added co-chair **Robin Mirsky**. "On behalf of the entire board, we're thrilled to welcome her to the team, and we look forward to working with her to realize the incredible opportunities ahead."

"For me, having the chance to link arms with Hot Docs was an unequivocal swipe right. From my first trip to Toronto for the festival and its legendary pitch forum, it was love at first sight," said **Marie Nelson**. "Hot Docs has earned its reputation as a beacon for the global documentary filmmaking community and their audiences by fostering a sense of home and supporting the best in the genre year-round. I am so energized to begin working with my colleagues at Hot Docs to continue innovating and building an even more inclusive and dynamic future for our storytellers."

Ms. Nelson is a media veteran with decades of experience in independent documentary film, news, and broadcasting. She has held senior positions at American networks, including most recently as Senior Vice President at ABC News/Disney where she led a brand and content strategy that pioneered and developed inclusive and diverse-led content for television, streaming and film audiences. She successfully built multicultural audiences, launching groundbreaking, Emmy award-winning nonfiction programs like the ABC/Hulu/Disney+/Star series "Soul of a Nation" that doubled the diverse audience composition of ABC's primetime slate and captured 11 Emmy nominations.

Ms. Nelson partnered with teams across The Walt Disney Company and Nikole Hannah Jones, Oprah Winfrey, Harpo, The New York Times, and Lionsgate to secure and develop the Pulitzer prize-winning “The 1619 Project” docuseries for Hulu Originals. Prior to ABC News, Ms. Nelson was Vice President for News and Independent Film at PBS where she oversaw programming for such prestigious documentary series as Frontline, Independent Lens and POV. During her tenure, those series produced several Academy Award nominated and short-listed feature films, including “I Am Not Your Negro”, “Abacus”, “Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution”, “One Child Nation”, and “Minding the Gap.” She has also held executive positions at WGBH in Boston, National Public Radio as well as at Viacom/BET Networks.

In addition to her extensive media experience, Ms. Nelson has served with government, non-profit and development organizations, including serving in two U.S. presidential administrations. For the Obama Administration, she was appointed to lead public diplomacy efforts for the President’s Special Envoy to Sudan in the U.S. Department of State. Under the Clinton Administration, Ms. Nelson was the international affairs director for U.S. Presidential Envoy to Africa, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson. Working with Rev. Jackson, she planned and executed the international civilian-led diplomatic mission that resulted in the release of 3 U.S. POWs during the international conflict in Kosovo. She holds a Master of Public Policy degree from the Harvard Kennedy School and a B.A. in Political Science and Women’s Studies from Duke University. Her work has been recognized by Emmy, Peabody, Edward R. Murrow, Walter Cronkite, and NAACP Image awards.

Hot Docs ([www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing and celebrating the art of documentary and to creating production opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Its annual spring festival in Toronto is North America’s largest documentary festival, conference and market, which welcomes thousands of international delegates for a full rich program of conference sessions, networking and market initiatives, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, a leading international co-financing pitch event. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar film fund portfolio, and fosters education through documentaries with its popular free Docs For Schools program that reaches over 100,000 students annually. 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-focused cinema, which hosts first-run films and curated films series, Curious Minds author talks and speakers series, the annual Hot Docs Podcast Festival and a range of other cultural events.

Ms. Nelson was selected for the position after a months-long international search. She assumes leadership from interim co-executive directors Erin Lau and Paul Lewis, whom the board thanks for their exceptional hard work and leadership throughout the transition.

After 25 years, first as Executive Director and then as President, Chris McDonald has decided to step back from his role on the Executive team. The Board of Directors thanks him for his immeasurable contributions to the organization's remarkable growth. In the early years, Mr. McDonald expanded the Festival's public screenings, established the Hot Docs Forum and launched key programs and initiatives, including Docs For Schools and Hot Docs' film fund portfolio. In 2012, he negotiated a partnership that saw Hot Docs renovate, operate and program the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema and, in 2016, he

negotiated the purchase of the facility. He will continue to work with Hot Docs in a voluntary capacity on special projects.

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[Hot Docs \(www.hotdocs.ca\)](http://www.hotdocs.ca), 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 30th annual edition from April 27 to May 7, 2023, in cinemas across Toronto, with a selection of films available online to audiences throughout Canada. Hot Docs will also mount a dynamic series of knowledge sessions, networking opportunities and market programs for documentary practitioners and industry delegates, including the renowned Hot Docs Forum, Hot Docs Deal Maker and The Doc Shop. In celebration of its 30th anniversary and a dedication to excellence in non-fiction storytelling, Hot Docs will present the Podcast Festival Showcase, featuring a slate of today's hottest podcasts live on stage; along with a dynamic line-up of industry panels and master classes featuring podcast game-changers. Year-round, Hot Docs supports the Canadian and international industry with professional development programs and a multi-million-dollar film 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.

Starting Tuesday, March 28, Festival ticket package holders, including Doc Soup subscribers, can redeem their ticket packages, and Hot Docs Members can purchase single tickets. Starting Tuesday, April 4, single tickets will be available to the public. Tickets and ticket packages can be purchased and/or redeemed [online](http://www.hotdocs.ca) at [www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca) or in person at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema Box Office, located at 506 Bloor Street West (hours vary daily in accordance with cinema screenings). Single tickets are \$19 to regular Festival screenings and \$22 to Special Presentations screenings (\$17-19 members). Special events vary in price. A Festival 12-Pack is \$199 and a Festival 20-Pack is \$279. Hot Docs offers free tickets for all screenings before 5:00 p.m. to those 60+ and students with valid photo I.D., available online the day of the screening, subject to availability. Free screenings for students courtesy of CBC and CBC Gem.

Hot Docs is proud to include Scotia Wealth Management as its Presenting Platinum Partner; Rogers Group of Funds as its Founding Partner; CBC as its Signature Partner; Netflix as its Presenting Partner; and Telefilm Canada, the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario as its Major Supporters.

**Media Contact:**

Juan M. Gonzalez-Calcano  
Media Relations Manager  
Hot Docs  
[jgonzalezcalcano@hotdocs.ca](mailto:jgonzalezcalcano@hotdocs.ca)