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Contact:
Tim Dougherty
805-687-6065
tdougherty@sbscholarship.org



Barbara Robertson Set to Retire as CEO of Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, CA — Capping an impactful, three-decade career in the area’s nonprofit sector, Barbara Robertson has announced her retirement as president and CEO of the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara, effective December 31. A search for her successor will commence immediately.

“We owe Barbara a tremendous debt of gratitude for her calm, steady leadership during a period of unprecedented social turmoil and uncertainty these past two-plus years,” said Scholarship Foundation Board Chair Matt Rowe. “Despite numerous daunting challenges stemming from the pandemic and its aftermath, she has positioned the organization for continued success as an invaluable educational resource for students and families in our community. I am personally grateful for her tireless work on behalf of the Scholarship Foundation, and for her grit and agreeable temperament in the face of extraordinary adversity. We wish her a restful and enjoyable retirement. It is richly deserved.”

Ms. Robertson was barely a month into her tenure as president and CEO when Covid lockdowns first disrupted Scholarship Foundation operations. She responded decisively, restructuring staff positions and spearheading the transition to remote work and virtual alternatives to Foundation events and applicant interviews. Under her leadership, the organization awarded almost \$22 million in college scholarships, adopted a new application software platform, and met all programmatic and institutional deadlines and revenue goals.

“I could not be prouder of what my team and I accomplished under some genuinely difficult circumstances,” she said. “The Scholarship Foundation is a true community gem, and it has been the honor of my lifetime to have contributed to its 60-year legacy of supporting the educational aspirations

of students and families countywide. I expect to see even greater things from this exceptional organization in the years ahead.”

A native of Vancouver, Ms. Robertson studied business economics at the University of British Columbia and accounting at the British Columbia Institute of Technology before working as a consultant, first at Peat, Marwick and Partners in Vancouver and later at Western Management Consultants in Vancouver and Information Systems Group in Ottawa. After relocating to Santa Barbara in 1989, she was appointed fiscal director for the Santa Barbara Community Housing Corp. and in 1993 became director of finance for the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara, a position she held for 11 years. Ms. Robertson went on to serve as director of finance and administration at the Foundation for Santa Barbara City College and as vice president of finance and administration at the Music Academy of the West before rejoining the Scholarship Foundation as operations director in April 2011. Appointed chief operating officer in July 2016, she served as the Foundation’s interim president and CEO from April to July 2015 and February to September 2018. She was named president and CEO of the Scholarship Foundation in February 2020.

Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, the Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara is the nation’s largest community-based provider of college scholarships, having cumulatively awarded more than \$140 million to some 60,000 county students since its founding in 1962. A nonprofit organization, the Scholarship Foundation also provides free financial aid advising services. For additional information, visit www.sbscholarship.org.

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