

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 8, 2018

Contact: Barbara Reed

Public Information Officer

334-242-4076, ext. 223

[barbara.reed@arts.alabama.gov](mailto:barbara.reed@arts.alabama.gov)



## **ASCA ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF AL HEAD, ITS LONG-TIME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Montgomery, Ala. – At the June 7, 2018 quarterly meeting of the Alabama State Council on the Arts in Montgomery, Al Head, Executive Director of the Council for the past 33 years announced his retirement, effective December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018. Head summarized a long career with the state arts agency field by saying, *“It has been a wonderful and memorable run in a field that is made up of a special group of artists, arts administrators, arts educators, arts patrons and volunteers. The opportunity to contribute a bit to the quality of life in Alabama through the arts has been a privilege.”*

Head who served in state arts agency positions in Florida and Louisiana before returning home to Alabama as council director in 1985 is the longest sitting state arts agency director in the country. Prior to accepting the position in Alabama, Head was the Director of the Louisiana Division of the Arts and Arts Council from 1977 to 1985. As the first state arts director under governmental reorganization he orchestrated the first state appropriation for the Arts Council in Louisiana. His state service began in 1972 with the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and included a two year period as director of the Stephen Foster Folk life Center. Including the Florida and Louisiana years Head’s tenure in the arts field spans over forty-six years, a four decade period that has experienced significant change in the arts and government.

During Head’s time in Alabama he considers, the development of a nationally recognized state folklife program, the creation of the Alabama Writers Forum, the creation of Design Alabama, the creation of the Alabama Dance Council, expanding arts education partnerships and the cultivation of a cultural exchange with Pietrasanta Italy as a few of many highlights. For personal recognition on a national level he points to receiving the National Heritage Award in 2012 given by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Gary Young Award presented to him in 1998 by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies as particularly rewarding.

As part of his retirement announcement Head emphasized his respect and appreciation for the outstanding work of a dedicated staff, most having been with the agency for many years. He noted with sincere gratitude the contributions of dozens of state council members, individuals appointed by the Governor, who give generously of their time, talents and resources to promote the arts. Head emphasized how fortunate and blessed he has been to be surrounded by such special Alabamians.

The Council will immediately begin a national search for a replacement of Al Head with the intention of having a new director in place by January 1, 2019. Until that time Head will remain active in the director’s position and available to oversee a smooth transition. A job announcement with application details will be distributed widely before the end of the month

*The Alabama State Council on the Arts is the official state arts agency of Alabama. The staff of the Council, directed by Al Head, administers the grants programs and provides financial assistance in arts planning and programming. The Council receives its support through an annual appropriation from the Alabama Legislature and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.*

For more information, please contact Barbara Reed at 334-242-4076, ext. 223 or visit our website: [www.arts.alabama.gov](http://www.arts.alabama.gov).

## **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

#### **ALABAMA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 31, 2018**

#### **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

##### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Council is to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality for all Alabamians by providing support for the state's diverse and rich artistic resources. Learn more about ASCA's goals and support philosophy at:

[www.arts.alabama.gov](http://www.arts.alabama.gov)

[Publications tab: A State Blueprint for Supporting the Arts](#)

##### **History, Grant-making and scope of Operations:**

The Council was created initially by executive order in 1966 and by legislative act in 1967 and was established as the official "State Arts Agency of Alabama". ASCA operates with a state appropriation of over five-million dollars plus \$765,000 in federal funds provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Over 330 grants to 225-plus organizations, schools and individual artists are awarded and administered annually ranging from \$1000 to \$185,000. Grant-making, arts education leadership, arts service organizations partnership support, gallery exhibition programming, production of an arts awards program, conducting various special projects and the sponsorship of a statewide leadership institute constitute the majority of ASCA's operations.

##### **Governance:**

The Council itself consists of fifteen member appointed by the governor for a term of six-years. Members can and often are appointed for multiple terms. While coming from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds, members represent the interests and needs of arts organizations, artists, educational institutions and the general public statewide. The executive director serves at the pleasure of the Council and is thus, hired and fired by the Council. (Note, the retiring ED has held that position for the past 33 years and in the past 50 years there have been only three executive directors) The Council is the sole and final authority in the approval of grants awarded by the agency. In addition to grant authority the Council is actively involved with the development of a multi-year state arts plan and approves these plan documents periodically. The Council approves operational policies recommended by the executive director and policy otherwise deemed necessary as long as those are not in conflict with existing state policies and procedures. ASCA is an independent state agency, not falling under any other department. The Council is subject to all state rules, regulations and policies governing all state agencies and personnel.

##### **Staff:**

The Council currently has a staff of sixteen (many of whom have been with the agency for 15-plus years). The current professional staff members (six program managers, a director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, a deputy director, public information officer, a grants manager) all work under the state merit system with the exception of a "confidential council assistant". The executive director is responsible for hiring, firing as part of overall staff management and development.

## **POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Executive Director:

Directs day to day operations of the agency including, but not limited to, finance/budgeting, personnel management, grants administration, planning, public relations and information, advocacy and reporting requirements.

Regularly communicates with council members and carries out policies set by the Council. Special emphasis is given to working with the council chair on a wide range of functions involving the planning of quarterly business meetings, advocacy activities, council committee work and problem solving as needed.

Provides internal and external leadership relative to ASCA's strategic multi-year plan designed to support and promote the arts, individual artists and arts education statewide.

Acts as the primary representative for the Council with the State Legislature, various state agencies, South Arts (regional organization), the National Endowment for the Arts and federal agencies concerned with arts policy and support. Note: Communication with the Alabama Legislature is viewed as a priority function and responsibility.

Builds and maintains partnerships in both the public and private sectors that maximize ASCA's ability to achieve the goals and objectives articulated in the agency's long range plan.

Provides professional assistance and guidance to arts administrators, arts educators, artists and a wide range of individuals involved in planning and programming in the arts.

## **DESIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

A successful ED candidate should:

Possess a thorough understanding of the non-profit and public sector arts field. Experience in public arts policy and awareness of the legislative process are important attributes.

Possess a successful track record of working with a board of directors and showing skill with facilitating group dynamics in achieving organizational goals and objectives.

Present a resume reflecting staff management, personnel development and supervision of a diverse team of workers.

Have a high level of communication skills both verbally and in writing.

Have a professional background that reflects leadership in arts advocacy and an ability to effectively influence public and private sector support for the arts. Knowledge of and experience working in a governmental environment including the legislative process is an important attribute.

Demonstrate experience with fiscal management and the ability to develop budgets necessary for achieving a strategic agency or organizational plan.

Possess a degree of proficiency in technology as this knowledge and these skills contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency.

Have the ability to articulate a vision for growth and support for the arts at a state level.

Possess an understanding of and sensitivity to contemporary art forms and traditional cultural expressions typical of those found in the South and in multiple forms nationally.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates for the executive director's position must have a Bachelor's degree in arts administration, an arts discipline or a closely related field from an accredited college or university and five (5) years of high-level administrative or professional work with an arts organization, public arts agency or educational institution.

Three (3) of those years of experience must have involved one or more of the following: supervising other employees, overseeing and coordinating general operations of a division, or unite of programming, exercising responsibility for development of policies and procedures or the coordination of strategic planning in the arts.

Advanced degrees in an arts field of study are viewed as highly desirable and are considered an advantage for a candidate seeking the executive director's position. Multiple years of experience with a state arts agency are also viewed as a highly desirable qualification.

A successful candidate must be able to travel in- state and out of state independently with a degree of regularity and work extra hours as the job responsibilities require. State vehicles and expenses are provided for travel purposes.

## SALARY

Commensurate with training and experience (Compensation includes a comprehensive benefit package, insurance, retirement, annual & sick leave, holidays, savings options)

The Council Office is based in Montgomery Alabama, 201 Monroe Street, Suite 110 – RSA Tower. Office space includes the Alabama Artists Gallery.

## APPLICATION AND INQUIRIES

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 31, 2018**

Send cover letter and resume (electronic format preferred) with contact information, work experience, qualifications and accomplishments as referenced above to:

For submission and general inquiry

Jackie Berry  
Executive Assistant  
Alabama State Council on the Arts  
201 Monroe Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
Jackie.berry@arts.alabama.gov

For confidential inquiry and/or specific job related questions, interested parties may contact:

Mr. Al Head  
Executive Director,  
Alabama State Council on the Arts  
201 Monroe Street  
Montgomery, Al 36104  
334-242-4076 ext. 245  
[al.head@arts.alabama.gov](mailto:al.head@arts.alabama.gov)

ASCA website: [www.arts.alabama.gov](http://www.arts.alabama.gov)