



MEDIA ADVISORY
For Immediate Release
April 15, 2021

**The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars.org) COO, Christine Simmons,
Giving Keynote Speech at RPAA's 2nd Annual *Women Take the Stage* Event**
- Proceeds benefit RPAA's BrightLights Education Initiatives

RPAA is excited to announce its **2nd Annual WOMEN TAKE THE STAGE EVENT** – a special **virtual event** featuring guest keynote speaker, **Christine Simmons**, as well as a dynamic panel of Richmond area women— **Eva DeVirgilis** (Award-winning Playwright, Actress, and Makeup Artist), **Stephanie J. Gilliard, Esq.** (Vice President, Legal Affairs/General Counsel – Virginia for Colonial Downs Group, LLC), and **Lisa Ruggles** (Senior Vice President of Analytics, Research and News for CoStar Group).

Ms. Simmons will be sharing an inspirational keynote on *“Living Unapologetically.”* Both she and the panelists will dive into this topic during a moderated conversation as well as discuss how they incorporate the arts and creativity into their regular day-to-day lives, and what impact arts and arts education have had on their lives.

Prior to joining the Academy, Christine served as the President and COO of the Los Angeles Sparks (a founding team of the WNBA), Executive Vice President of Magic Johnson Enterprises, as well as held senior positions at both Disney and NBC/Universal Studios. Her dedication to excellence and passion for giving back has earned her a number of honors including: the YMCA's 2019 Brotherhood Award, being named to the 2018 Ebony Power 100 List, as well as the LA Business Journal's 2016, 2017 and 2018 list of 500 most influential people in Los Angeles.

This virtual event will be streamed live from the stage of the historic and beautiful Carpenter Theatre at Dominion Energy Center. Hosted by Richmond Performing Arts Alliance's (RPAA's) Women's Leadership Council, proceeds from this event benefit the BrightLights Education Initiatives of RPAA.

In its inaugural year in 2019, the SOLD OUT *WTTTS* event featured keynote speaker, Amy Robach, co-anchor of ABC's *“20/20”* and reporter for *“Good Morning America”* (GMA) and ABC News, as well as notable local panelists – including Kristen Cavallo (CEO of The Martin Agency), Shannon Siriano Greenwood (Co-Founder of Rebelle Con) and Pamela J. Royal, M.D. (Owner and President, Royal Dermatology).



What: Women Take the Stage

Tickets at: <https://rpaalliance.com/WomenTakeTheStage>

Who: RPAA's Women's Leadership Council (mission: enriching the lives of women in our community through the arts while increasing the visibility of and commitment to RPAA); Members include: Suzanne Gardner (Chair), Sally Bagley, Angela Cain, Teresa Chiocca, Natalie Garramone, Alison Martin, Carli M. Nelson, Cherry Peters, Nikki A. Powell, Jackie Stone, and Scott Warren. Event management by Grandeur & Grove Events.

When: Monday, May 17, 2021 at 12 O'clock

Where: Zoom (Streamed live from the Carpenter Theatre Stage at Dominion Energy Center)

SPONSORS*: Altria (Presenting Sponsor); ABC 8News (Media Sponsor); Quirk Hotel (Hotel Sponsor); Wells Fargo; Dominion Energy; Patient First

*Sponsors confirmed as of 4/1/2021

SOCIAL MEDIA: Follow us @RPAAlliance on Facebook and Instagram for all our latest posts.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES: Local panelists (as available) and RPAA board and staff available for interviews with advanced notice.

PHOTO/VIDEO OPPORTUNITY: Photos and video can be provided by RPAA.

Richmond Performing Arts Alliance (formerly Richmond CenterStage Foundation) is a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to provide diverse local and world-class performing arts, transformative arts education experiences for students of all ages, and inspirational venues—all to strengthen the culture and economic vitality of the Greater Richmond region. RPAA venues include Dominion Energy Center, home to the historic Carpenter Theatre, Libby S. Gottwald Playhouse and Rhythm Hall, as well as Altria Theater – the largest performance venue between New York and Atlanta. Its arts education initiative operates out of the Genworth BrightLights Education Center and reaches students of all ages in the City of Richmond and surrounding counties.

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