

## Vital Voices Announces New Board of Directors Leadership

*Kate James and Geraldine Laybourne Elected as Chair and Vice-Chair of the International Women's Leadership Non-Profit Board of Directors*

**Washington, DC (October 31, 2019)** – Vital Voices Global Partnership is proud to welcome new leadership to the Board of Directors, including Chair Kate James, Former Chief Corporate Affairs and Global Marketing Officer of Pearson, and Vice-Chair Geraldine “Gerry” Laybourne, founder and former CEO and Chairman of Oxygen Media.

“I am delighted to announce Kate and Gerry as the new leadership of our Board,” said Vital Voices President and CEO Alyse Nelson. “Both Kate and Gerry have been incredible supporters and committed partners to the organization. Kate’s experience in global marketing and brand strategy will help Vital Voices expand into the next 20 years of our work. Gerry’s knowledge from building world-renowned businesses and her innovative approaches to leadership and mentoring are woven into the fabric of Vital Voices’ programming. We’re thrilled that this pair has been selected as our leadership at this pivotal moment in our growth.”

Kate James is an existing member of the Vital Voices Board of Directors and has been a supporter of the organization for many years. As the Chief Corporate Affairs and Global Marketing officer for Pearson, she oversaw communications, marketing, government relations, investor relations and the company’s social impact work. Prior to joining Pearson, Kate was the Chief Communications Officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, running their global communications efforts to raise awareness and build engagement around global poverty, health and U.S. education issues. Kate was responsible for overseeing the communications and brand functions, driving public engagement on the issues the foundation champions, managing reputation risk, and building media partnerships to support independent coverage of critical development and education issues. She’s brought that same expertise to shape and reinvigorate Vital Voices’ brand and message.

“It’s an honor to be named Chair of the Board of Directors,” said Kate James. “I am excited to be working alongside Gerry and the rest of our fantastic Board to deliver on Alyse and the organization’s bold vision for the future – one that will transform Vital Voices and the scale of our impact, creating positive change for millions by enabling women leaders to flourish and build a gender equal world. This organization is poised for growth and I’m thrilled to be a part of it.”

Gerry Laybourne founded Oxygen Media and served as its chairman and CEO until 2007. Under her leadership at Nickelodeon, the network became the top-rated 24-hour cable service and won Emmy, Parent’s Choice and Peabody Awards. She serves on the Board of Directors of Symantec, Betaworks, and 9 Story – as well as the Board of Trustees of Vassar College. Gerry is a long-time champion of Vital Voices and its mission, serving as a Global Ambassador with the Global Ambassadors Program (in partnership with Bank of America) and traveling and working with the organization to train and mentor women in India, Argentina and East Africa. Known fondly as the “godmother of mentoring,” her efforts to pay it forward inspired members of the Vital Voices Global Leadership Network to organize annual Mentoring Walks that connect established and emerging women leaders.

“Vital Voices is a powerful organization that deeply impacts women around the world,” said Gerry Laybourne. “I’m excited to join the leadership of the Board after a long and inspiring relationship with the organization, and ready to start working on collectively championing women solving problems in their communities in meaningful ways.”

They replace former Chair Beth Brooke-Marciniak and former Vice-Chair V. Sue Molina, who both remain active members of the Vital Voices Board of Directors. Kate and Gerry began their official term as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board in September 2019.

### **ABOUT VITAL VOICES**

Vital Voices Global Partnership is an international non-profit organization that identifies and partners with creative and fearless women leaders around the world. Vital Voices searches the world for women leaders with daring vision for change, then partners with them to make that vision a reality. We provide them with capacity building, skills training, grants, access to a network of their peers, mentorship, visibility, recognition and guidance to accelerate change on a global scale.

For more than 20 years, Vital Voices has invested in women leaders from over 180 countries and territories. We are venture catalysts, supporting women who advance economic opportunity, increase political and public engagement, end gender-based violence and promote human rights. Vital Voices connects women already solving problems in their communities and equips them with the tools they need to incite global, positive change and accelerate shared progress for all. Visit [www.vitalvoices.org](http://www.vitalvoices.org) to learn more.