



Music Conservatory of Westchester Announces Edgemont's Jean Newton as New Executive Director

Rodd Berro named Board President

White Plains, N.Y. (December 9, 2011) – The Music Conservatory of Westchester (MCW), a non-profit community school for music and the arts, has appointed Edgemont resident Dr. Jean Newton as executive director. Mr. Rodd D. Berro, a member of the Conservatory's board of trustees since 2008, was also recently elected as board president.

Newton has been on the Conservatory's staff since 1995. Most recently, in her role as dean of students and faculty, she supervised 75 faculty, three staff positions, and was responsible for program development and operations as well as student recruitment and retention. Her extensive experience as an arts administrator and educator led not only to expanded performance opportunities for MCW's students, but also a 10 percent increase in enrollment. While serving as the school's director of development, Newton supervised the successful completion of their \$7.8 million capital campaign.

"It's such a privilege to have the opportunity to lead this stellar institution with its rich history and bright future," said Newton. "The Conservatory is very close to my heart. My son studied piano and my daughter studied flute here. When I joined the staff 16 years ago, I had hoped it would be a long-term relationship."

In addition to carving a successful career in arts administration, Newton has also been an active performer and teacher. She joined the Conservatory's faculty in 1995, established the school's Baroque ensembles, and continues teaching harpsichord and chamber music. Prior to her focus on an administrative career, Newton performed as a soloist and chamber musician with a variety of ensembles including the Cantabile Chamber Players, New York Baroque Ensemble, New York String Ensemble and Musica Antiqua. She has appeared with the 92nd Street Y Chorale, The String Section, New Jersey Chamber Symphony, City College Faculty String Quartet, and Bronx Arts Ensemble, among others.

Newton is currently secretary of the New York Metro Area Chapter of the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, as well as a board member and recording secretary of the Westchester County Arts Leadership Association. She is a former board member of the SUMMIT Music Festival and Edgemont School Foundation. Newton also served on peer review panels for the United States Department of Education, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

A graduate of the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College where she earned her masters degree in harpsichord and early music performance, Ms. Newton also earned a doctoral degree in English Literature from the City University of New York's Graduate School and University Center. She additionally holds a New York State Permanent Teaching Certificate in English for grades 7-12.

Newton succeeds Carol Shiffman, who passed away in October after a long illness. Recognized nationally for her work in arts administration, Shiffman was a devoted leader and champion of music, dance and arts education. "In her two-and-a-half years at the

Conservatory, Carol provided extraordinary leadership, passion and organizational development,” said Newton. “Her impact on the Conservatory will be felt for years to come as the spirit of teamwork she fostered lives on. I’m honored to continue her work and also carve new paths.”

Music Conservatory of Westchester offers music and theatre programs for students of all ages and skill levels, and music therapy for children and adults with disabilities. Centrally located in White Plains, N.Y., the Conservatory recently welcomed Faust Harrison Piano Center, nationally recognized for restoration and sales of Steinways and other high quality instruments, as an on-campus resident.

“We have some very exciting plans for the Conservatory,” Newton continued. “I’m very much looking forward to working with our wonderful community of students, parents, faculty, board and staff.”

Newton’s new role at the Conservatory leaves a vacancy in the Dean’s position. Dr. Sarah Wetherbee, who had been Assistant Dean since September 2008, will serve as Interim Dean through June 2012. Dr. Wetherbee holds a B.M. from the Curtis Institute and a D.M.A. from Peabody Institute of Music. An accomplished violinist and violist, she is known for her work as an administrator, teacher and performer, and has served in numerous faculty and staff positions at Gettysburg College, the Levine School of Music, Arlington Symphony, and Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, among others. She has been co-founder and Artistic Director of Fiori Musicali, an ensemble in residence at the Walters Art Museum, has served on the board of the American Composers Forum, and currently serves on the board of the Greenwich Village Orchestra in NYC.

“Jean has excelled in every role she’s had at the Conservatory. We are so very confident her leadership and experience as executive director will propel our school and its offerings to even greater heights,” Rodd Berro said.

Berro is the president and owner of Pegasus Asset Management Inc., a Private Wealth Management firm based in Montebello, N.Y. He received his Certified Financial Planning™ certification (CFP®) designation in 1995 and is a member of the Financial Planning Association. Before joining Pegasus, Berro was a co-founder of Arts Data Associates, a marketing and consulting firm. The former president of the Armonk Players, Berro still maintains a board member position for the organization. In addition, he is currently the treasurer of the Financial Planning Association, Greater Hudson Valley Chapter. Berro earned his B.F.A. in Theatre from North Carolina School of the Arts. He currently resides in Armonk, N.Y., with his wife, Elizabeth, and two children, Kelsey and Zachary.

“I’m truly honored to serve as board president of this community institution. This school has meant a great deal to my family and I. My daughter took lessons for years, and my son continues to. I’ve witnessed the power of MCW first hand, and am excited on what the future might bring for this arts campus in the heart of White Plains,” he said.

The Music Conservatory of Westchester is at 216 Central Avenue in White Plains, N.Y. They can be reached at (914) 761-3900 or by visiting www.musicconservatory.org.

About Music Conservatory of Westchester

Founded in 1929, the Music Conservatory of Westchester (www.musicconservatory.org) is a non-profit community school of the arts, providing music, musical theatre education, and music therapy for people of all ages and abilities. The Conservatory’s 36,000-square-foot facility in White Plains offers a Recital Hall and 43 acoustically designed classrooms and teaching studios. Their comprehensive programs, which serve 3,700 students annually, include performing ensembles, musicianship classes, student performances, master classes, workshops, and more. All students receive free admission to the Conservatory’s annual series of faculty recitals and children’s concerts.

This year, the Conservatory awarded \$110,000 in scholarship support and tuition assistance to more than 115 of its students. The Conservatory is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, a member of the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, and is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music.

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Rod Berro of Armonk, N.Y.



Dr. Jean Newton of Edgemont, N.Y.