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R.T. Rybak Named CEO and President of The Minneapolis Foundation

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — The Board of Trustees of The Minneapolis Foundation announced today that R.T. Rybak will become the seventh CEO/President in the Foundation's history. Beginning July 1, Rybak will lead one of the nation's oldest and largest community foundations, succeeding Sandra Vargas, who retires at the end of June. Rybak currently serves on the Foundation's Board.

For 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve the community through its six focus areas: the arts, civic engagement, economic vitality, education, the environment, and health. Last year, the Foundation distributed \$80 million in grants. It is focused on creating OneMpls – a community where equity thrives.

"Our unique mission is to ensure the long-term vitality of Minneapolis and the region," explained Board Chair Norm Rickeman. "We do that by supporting the generous philanthropic nature of Minnesotans and by engaging directly in community issues. While much is going well today, the disparities that exist in our community are unacceptable. We can and must do better. We can only make progress if we all come together, and we've hired the best person to do just that! R.T. has the passion, energy, experience, and connections to hit the ground running. He will be working with our diverse Board, community partners, business and government leaders, and donors to make a difference. Making that difference will also require that we listen to, partner with, and follow new voices in our community and in our neighborhoods."

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As it launches its second century of serving the community, the Foundation will have to provide the leadership and resources needed to tackle the deep racial, social, and economic inequities that still plague the community. The new CEO/President will lead that work, while actively engaging donors and nurturing the community's philanthropic culture.

"I am hopeful that the selection of R.T. will allow us to build off the progress we are making, and that it will lead to finding real solutions to the gaps that exist in our community," said Board Vice Chair Nekima Levy-Pounds. "I remain optimistic about the future of this community and the role that the Foundation can play in advancing equity for all who live here."

The search was national in scope and was supported by the international search firm of Isaacson, Miller. "We had an extremely robust pool of candidates, spanning nonprofit, corporate, political, and education sectors," said John Sullivan, a Foundation Trustee and Chair of the Search Committee. "The Foundation plays a key role as a community convener – creating a space where people can come together to build solutions. It became apparent that R.T. has the ability to bring many parties to the table not just to talk, but to work together for the greater good. His range of professional experiences, his collaborative nature and personal passion for Minneapolis stood out among all the candidates."

A Minneapolis native, Rybak raised his family and has worked his entire career in the city. He is currently executive director of Generation Next, a public-private coalition focused on closing education gaps for children of color.

"R.T. has guided Gen Next with skill and passion as we have made strong progress in orchestrating efforts to address persistent educational opportunity gaps in our community," said Eric Kaler, Gen Next Leadership Council Co-Chair. "We are thrilled he and The Minneapolis Foundation will continue to be strongly engaged in that work."

During his 12 years as Mayor of Minneapolis, Rybak led efforts in economic development, affordable housing, and transportation. He also partnered with The Minneapolis Foundation on a community-wide effort to prevent youth violence. As mayor, he claims the launch of the STEP-UP summer jobs program, which has employed 22,000 young people, as his proudest achievement. Previously, he worked in journalism, marketing, commercial real estate, and Internet strategy.

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A graduate of Boston College with a degree in Political Science and Communications, he is the author of "Pothole Confidential," a book about his years as Mayor.

Rybak is also a Senior Advisor for Municipal Practice at Living Cities, which is focused on working with cross-sector leaders in cities across the country to build a new type of urban practice aimed at dramatically improving the economic well-being of low-income people. Additionally, he serves on the Boards of the Northside Achievement Zone and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation.

"It is a tremendous honor to be joining a true institution that has spent a century doing great things for my hometown," said Rybak. "Knowing what this Foundation can do, and how much more needs to be done, I know we can, and must, do even more to make sure the prosperity so many enjoy is shared by everyone."

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About The Minneapolis Foundation: For 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to enrich our community and the world. The Foundation manages more than \$700 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than \$50 million in grants. The Foundation brings people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community. www.minneapolisfoundation.org