

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 15, 2020**

FIVE NEW MEMBERS JOIN NJCH BOARD

(Trenton, NJ) – The New Jersey Council for the Humanities announces that five new members were recently elected to its Board of Trustees. The Council welcomes Laura Hertzog, J.D., Mark Hontz, J.D., Sadaf Jaffer, Ph.D., Sara Siegler, and Gregory Waters, Ph.D. to the governing body of the organization. They each have a professional background and extensive experience in the humanities. All five new members will take an active role in promoting the Council in their own communities and in promoting the public humanities throughout the state.

Members of the NJCH Board of Trustees undertake important governance, fiduciary, and advisory responsibilities and play a key role in fundraising and advocacy. All members foster the advancement of the NJCH mission – to harness the power of the humanities to strengthen our society.

These newly-elected members bring a wealth of expertise and talent to their service to NJCH, the nonprofit state partner of the National Endowment of the Humanities.

Laura Hertzog, J.D. is the General Counsel to the University and Board of Trustees of William Paterson University. From 2013-2018, she served as general counsel and Dean of Faculty and Staff Relations at Hunter College, City University of New York. She also served as the Labor Designee and Chief Ethics Officer at Hunter. Prior positions include Director of EEO/Diversity and Inclusion Executive Education Programs at Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Dean for Diversity and Compliance and Special Assistant to the President for Campus Relations at Hunter College, and Director of Global Diversity at Credit Suisse First Boston/NYC. Laura earned an AB in East Asian Studies from Princeton University, a JD cum laude from the University of Michigan Law School, and an MA in History from Montclair State University. She is a resident of Montclair.

Mark J. Hontz, J.D. is a partner at Hollander Strelzik Law Firm and Vice-Chairman of the Board of SB One Bank. In addition to serving on the Board of SB One Bank, Mark has served as President of the Sussex County Bar Association (2003-2004), President of the Greater Newton Chamber of Commerce (2001), Founding Trustee of the Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (1993) and in various capacities within his church, Rotary Club, and Volunteer Fire Department, as well as the director of his own family's band. He is a resident of Newton.

Sadaf Jaffer, Ph.D. is a scholar, activist, and elected official. She is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Princeton University where she teaches courses on South Asian, Islamic, and Asian American Studies. She has published articles in the *Journal of Women's History*, as well as the *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, *Huffington Post*, and

Altmuslimah blogs. Sadaf is also the mayor of Montgomery Township, New Jersey where she has focused her administration on good governance and increased transparency, communications, diversity, and inclusivity. She earned her bachelor's degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University and obtained her PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Harvard University with a secondary field in studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. She is a resident of Princeton.

Sara Siegler is a graduate of Douglass College with a BA in Economics, and a graduate of Rutgers University with a Masters in Library and Information Science. She has been working in public libraries for over 20 years, and currently serves as Assistant Director of the Ocean County Library. Sara is on the Board of Trustees for the Red Bank Public Library where she has previously served as Board President and as Treasurer, and she currently works on their Finance Committee. Sara is an Alternate for the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Committee. Previously, Sara served on the Board of Trustees for Jewish Family Services in Wilkes-Barre, PA. She is a resident of Red Bank.

Gregory Waters, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus of English at Montclair State University in New Jersey and a former director of the university's Honors Program. During the course of his career there he also served as Deputy Provost, Interim President and Vice President for University Advancement. Gregory received his B.A. from Georgetown University and his Ph.D from Rutgers University and was a member of the faculty and director of graduate and special programs at the University of Michigan's campus in Flint before coming to Montclair. A former chairman of NJCH, he has worked as a consultant for the National Endowment for the Humanities reviewing statewide programs in the humanities, and as a member of the faculty for several summer institutes sponsored by NEH to prepare humanities scholars to serve in literature and medicine programs in hospitals around the country. He is a resident of Montclair.

“The Board of Trustees of NJCH, the statewide partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, helps to oversee the organization and to ensure access to the public humanities for the residents our state,” said Executive Director Carin Berkowitz, Ph.D. “These newest trustees have been passionate, longtime advocates for the public humanities in New Jersey, and we are very proud to welcome them onto the NJCH board.”

Elected members of the NJCH Board of Trustees can serve up to two terms. Each term is three years. They also participate on at least one committee.

About the New Jersey Council for the Humanities

The New Jersey Council for the Humanities is a nonprofit state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. NJCH harnesses the power of the humanities to strengthen our pluralistic society. We envision a New Jersey that delights in diversity, appreciates that there are no easy answers, and finds joy and understanding in the humanities. We work statewide with cultural and community organizations to bring dynamic programming to the local level.

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