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Athens Area Community Foundation Initiates Search For New President/CEO

(For Immediate Release – October 20, 2016) The Athens Area Community Foundation (AACF) has initiated a nationwide executive search for a new president and chief executive officer to lead the organization. The top leadership seat became vacant last month after the resignation of Delene Porter to accept a position with a statewide organization. Porter served as the only AACF president since its inception in 2008.

“AACF is preparing to move to a new level of service to the community,” according to Bill Douglas, chair of the community foundation’s board and CEO/President of AthensFirst Bank & Trust. “The new president will have an opportunity to build upon the solid structure Delene, the board and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development have put in place during our early years. The board’s vision is to expand our footprint in the six counties served through additional donors and support of programs that make a difference in the lives of citizens in this area.”

The AACF helps passionate donors leave permanent legacies, serves as a well-informed grant maker, and shapes effective responses to community needs through collaboration. As a public grant making community foundation, the organization partners with donors, nonprofits, and community institutions to build, distribute and preserve philanthropic assets that will enhance quality of life in the area for generations to come. Counties served by the community foundation include Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Jackson, Madison, Oconee and Oglethorpe.

“The board is committed to bringing the community foundation to a self-sustaining status over the next two years,” says Douglas. “In order to accomplish this goal, we have identified several character traits required of the next leader. Leadership, business acumen and development are the top three attributes we will be looking for in the professional.”

Candidates for the position must hold a bachelor’s degree, ideally with an MA, MBA, JD or other post-graduate work, from an accredited college. Other requirements include a minimum of five years of development, management, executive and strategic leadership experience in the business world, a community foundation, other grant making foundation or high performing non-profit; a proven extended tenure in leading an organization through growth and change to achieve tactical objectives; and

experience as a team builder and leader that will effectively represent the AACF in the six county region served.

“Our search committee is looking for a professional who has the passion to work with critical issues facing our community while at the same time relate to philanthropic donors who are searching for an avenue to leave a lasting legacy on the community,” Douglas stated. “Excellent communication skills are an integral part of the day-to-day life of the community foundation’s executive. This will include working with our partners in the non-profit world and donors.”

The search committee for the president, in addition to Douglas, includes Pat Allen, retired, UGA; Phil Bettendorf, Athens First Bank & Trust; Webster Hewitt, Hewitt Lane Independent Financial Counsel; Kelly Holloway, Fortson, Bentley & Griffin, P.A.; Helen Mills, retired, UGA; and Alex Patterson, Esquire, retired, Alston & Bird, LLP. The committee has established the first quarter of 2017 as a start date for the new executive.

Other members of the board include: Buddy Allen, B. Allen and Company; Dr. David Allen, The Urology Clinic; Ricky Chastain, Chastain & Associates Insurance; Bill Cowser, Cowser & Avery, LLP and State Senator; Bertis Downs, Esquire and Manager REM; Robert Fezekas, Independent Financial Consultant; Dexter Fisher, Director of Facilities Management, UGA; Dr. Jennifer Frum, UGA; Tim Johnson, Family Connection Partnership/ Communities in Schools; Judge Steve C. Jones, US District Court, Northern District of Georgia; Kathy Kirbo, Reefball Foundation; Cynthia Lester, Synovus Trust Company, N.A.; Pat Mercardante, WHM Group at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management; Scot Morrissey, Athens Banner Herald; Jinx Patel, Athens Research and Technology, Inc.; Ed Perkins, retired, Johnson & Johnson; Dr. Tom Rodgers, Professor Emeritus, UGA Housing and Demographics Research Center; Lewis Shropshire, retired, Motel Enterprises; Dr. Regina Smith, UGA Associate Vice President for Research; Judge Lawton Stephens, Superior Court, Western Judicial Circuit; Ovita Thornton, Clarke County School Board & Georgia Clients Council; and Dr. Carol Winthrop, retired, UGA Academic Affairs.

The community foundation has partnered with The Chason Group, Inc., an executive search firm specializing in non-profits, to work with the search committee. For more information about the position, candidates may contact Tim Chason at 404.735.0540. Additional information about AACF can be viewed at www.athensareacf.org.