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## Hugo House Announces Leadership Transition

SEATTLE – Feb. 19, 2021 – The Hugo House Board of Directors today announced the resignation of executive director Tree Swenson, effective immediately. Swenson leaves Hugo House in strong financial health after nine years of steady growth under her leadership, including a new home for the organization on Capitol Hill.

Swenson said she wholeheartedly supports Hugo House and its mission, and believes her departure will enable the organization to move forward with building a more inclusive and equitable future.

“Serving as executive director of Hugo House has been an honor and a pleasure,” said Swenson. “I have deep respect and admiration for the organization and its mission to be a space for writers to come together, learn and grow. I look forward to watching Hugo House continue to flourish, repair relationships, diversify and thrive.”

Swenson’s many accomplishments during her nine-year tenure at Hugo House include leading the charge to raise funds for a new home for the organization on Capitol Hill, which opened to writers in fall 2018. Additionally, Seattle was named a UNESCO City of Literature, due in part to Hugo House’s contribution to the local literary community under Swenson’s leadership.

“Tree Swenson has been an asset to Hugo House over the past nine years, and the board greatly appreciates all of her many contributions,” said Dick Gemperle, Hugo House Board president. “Tree has been mentor and facilitator to many Seattle writers, of all types. We will miss her friendship and her leadership.”

“We have a lot of work to do as an organization to address our failures around equity and inclusion,” Gemperle said. “We are moving forward in that work with intensified urgency.”

The Board of Directors, led by board member Shahina Piyarali, is starting search efforts right away. The first step is solidifying a process that is as clear and transparent as possible.

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**About Hugo House**

Hugo House opens the literary world to everyone who loves books or has a drive to write—giving people a place to read words, hear words, and make their own words better through writing classes, readings and events, and residencies.

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Our physical location is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; all our programs currently operate online.