FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Association of Writers & Writing Programs Announces Retirement of Executive Director Cynthia Sherman

Norfolk, VA — Cynthia Sherman, executive director of the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP), announced her retirement as of June 30, 2024, after twelve years with the organization. Executive search firm Ballinger | Leafblade will lead a national search for Sherman's successor.

AWP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides support, advocacy, resources, and community to writers, college and university creative writing programs, and writing organizations. Sherman will work closely with Ballinger | Leafblade, AWP staff, and the AWP Board of Directors to ensure a seamless transition to new leadership while the organization maintains its comprehensive services to writers.

"Serving as executive director has been an honor; allowing me to witness the transformative power of literature within our community," said Sherman. "Together, our remarkable staff and board expanded programming and opportunities for writers, established a solid foundation to provide support and services, and navigated unprecedented times with resilience and grace. I am deeply grateful to have been part of such a vibrant and passionate community."

Sherman joined AWP in 2012 as the associate director of conferences and bookfair manager. In 2019, as the director of conferences, she presided over the 2019 AWP Conference & Bookfair in Portland, Oregon, the most successful in the organization’s history. In 2019, Sherman was named AWP’s executive director. During her five years as executive director, Sherman led AWP through the COVID-19 pandemic; positioned AWP as the essential shared space for writers, teachers, students, editors, and publishers; and spearheaded new initiatives, such as the AWP HBCU Fellowship Program. Prior to joining AWP, Sherman was the director of exhibits and associate director of conferences for the University of Maryland and manager of exhibits and meetings for the National Community Pharmacists Association. She was awarded the Certified Meeting Professional designation from the Events Industry Council, which recognizes expertise in the meetings industry.

"On behalf of AWP, I want to thank Cynthia Sherman for her unwavering dedication and remarkable resilience throughout her twelve years of service. Under her leadership, AWP went through a period of unprecedented innovation, growth, and transformation, from broadening our

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membership while navigating a dynamic university landscape, to weathering the challenges of a global pandemic and adapting AWP’s services to the ever-evolving publishing world,” said January Gill O’Neil, chair of the AWP Board of Directors. “Through it all, Cynthia has been a beacon of leadership and inspiration. Her legacy is marked by her steadfast commitment to excellence and her profound impact on the organization’s growth and success.”

For more information and updates on the executive director search, please see the AWP Writer’s News article.

About AWP
The Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides support, advocacy, resources, and community to writers, college and university creative writing programs, and writing organizations. Our mission is to amplify the voices of writers and the academic programs and organizations that serve them while championing diversity and excellence in creative writing. For more information, please visit www.awpwriter.org.