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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation Names Chanda Smith Baker Next President & CEO

Smith Baker to champion community-led solutions at Minnesota's largest community foundation

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (July 15, 2025) – The [Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation](#) (the Foundation) today announced that its Board of Directors has selected Chanda Smith Baker as the Foundation's next President & CEO. She will officially step into the role on August 25, 2025, succeeding Dr. Eric J. Jolly, who is retiring after a decade of transformative leadership.

Smith Baker was chosen through a national search that drew a strong and diverse pool of candidates. A seasoned executive and nationally recognized thought leader, Smith Baker brings deep expertise in aligning vital resources with community priorities and a steadfast belief in what's possible when people unite around a common purpose.

She most recently led Smith Baker; the organization she founded to cultivate leadership and champion community-led transformation across sectors. Smith Baker's previous roles include Chief Impact Officer at the Minneapolis Foundation and CEO of Pillsbury United Communities, where she built expansive partnerships with donors, nonprofit leaders and community stakeholders. Smith Baker has extensive board service experience, including on the boards of Allina Health, The Joyce Foundation and as a trustee at the Women's Foundation of Minnesota. She helped launch several innovative enterprises, including the Black Collective Foundation MN — Minnesota's first Black community foundation — and North Market, a full-service community grocery store and wellness center.

"I am deeply honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as President & CEO of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation," said Smith Baker. "As someone whose family roots run deep in Minnesota, this moment feels both personal and profound. What has always moved me about the Foundation is its unwavering commitment to listening — with compassion, humility and intention. That spirit of co-creation, so beautifully nurtured by Dr. Jolly and the entire Foundation team, is a legacy I hold with great care. I look forward to walking alongside our board, donors and community partners — across Saint Paul and the entire state — as we rise to meet today's challenges and dream forward a future where every Minnesotan has the opportunity not just to survive, but to thrive."

Smith Baker will take the helm of Minnesota's largest community foundation, which has granted over \$2 billion to the community since its inception in 1940 and stewards \$1.9 billion in charitable assets for community good. The Foundation is a trusted philanthropic partner for individuals, families and organizations statewide, providing more than 9,000 grants annually.

"On behalf of the Foundation's board of directors, I'm thrilled to welcome Chanda as our next President & CEO," said Board Chair Dr. Joseph Lee. "She brings not only an impressive track record but also a spirit of partnership and bridge building that deeply resonates with the Foundation's mission. Chanda's ability to bring people together to accelerate community-led solutions will be critical at this time when the nonprofit sector and communities across Minnesota are facing increasing uncertainty."

Smith Baker succeeds Jolly, who announced his retirement earlier this year. Jolly's legacy includes overseeing the merger between the Saint Paul Foundation and the Minnesota Community Foundation, launching a new strategic plan and introducing the Informs, Forms, Benefits model where communities that benefit from Foundation initiatives are also partners who inform and form the Foundation's work.

"The Foundation's vital work will not just continue, it will undoubtedly flourish under Chanda's leadership," said Jolly. "I appreciate her deep knowledge of community and creative approach to problem solving. I've long admired her ability to work in collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders to create enduring solutions and outcomes. Her distinguished career, bridging sectors and geographies, illustrates her embodiment of the Foundation's central value: Community is our compass. I am certain that she will continue to expand the impact and catalytic role of the Foundation in Saint Paul and across the state of Minnesota."

For more information, visit spmcf.org

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About the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation believes in the best of Minnesota and the power of its communities. With roots in Saint Paul and partners across the state, it is Minnesota's largest community foundation and the partner of choice for thousands of donors, nonprofits and community organizations. The Foundation aspires to create an equitable, just and vibrant Minnesota where all communities and people thrive by inspiring generosity, advocating for equity and investing in community-led solutions. Visit: spmcf.org.