



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Chuck Johnson
(703) 299-6633
cjohnson@adoptioncouncil.org

National Council For Adoption Announces Board Leadership

May 29, 2018 – Alexandria, VA – National Council For Adoption (NCFA) is proud to announce the unanimously elected officers of the Board of Directors, who begin their terms in May 2018. Wayne Winston Sharp, Ph.D., continues as Chairman of the Board of Directors for a second two-year term. Returning to their previously-held leadership positions are Heidi Bruegel Cox, J.D. as Vice Chairman, and Lisa A. Sinclair, Esq. as Secretary, who will both serve a two-year term. Andrea T. Vavonese, Esq., returns as Vice Chairman and Phillip Littleton as Treasurer for a one-year term. Jane Castanias joins the Executive Committee in a newly-created role of Strategic Plan Coordinator. Adoption has touched all of their families, and each officer has a unique story of how adoption changed their lives.

Chairman

Wayne Winston Sharp, Ph.D. was adopted at birth in Dallas, Texas, by Bob Henry and Mayana Yates Sharp, and raised on the family's "Knickerbocker Ranch" near San Angelo, Texas. After receiving his Ph.D. at Michigan State University, Dr. Sharp had a distinguished 25-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, was twice awarded the "President's Meritorious Foreign Service Award," and served two years in the White House as an Assistant Director of the President's Council on International Economic Policy. Upon his retirement in 1991, he became a Certified Financial Planner (CFP), and for 18 years directed a financial planning practice, retiring in 2009. Dr. Sharp and his wife Linda devote their time, leadership, financial and planning skills as volunteers and philanthropists in the areas of adoption, food assistance, musical arts, and community service.

"As an adopted person, I can affirm that adoption has played a positive and transformative role in my life," says Dr. Sharp. "My parents always said I was unique because I was *chosen*, and told me I even helped *chose* my sister, but as I was only 3 years old, maybe that was just a story, yet it always made us feel special and loved. Thus when I joined NCFA's Board, I was excited to further the cause of adoption for other orphans through an organization that has such an ambitious mission. Throughout my tenure as Chairman, we've developed a strong strategic plan to propel NCFA into the coming years as we remove barriers to adoption for children everywhere in need of families. I look forward to continuing my service as Chairman with such an outstanding leadership team and highly distinguished Board, working alongside the broader adoption community to better serve children and families."

Dr. Sharp joined the NCFA Board in 2007, and has also served as Treasurer, Vice Chairman, and Chairman Elect. He was instrumental in establishing the Foster Care Task Force in 2013, and growing it into NCFA's largest and most active Board-driven committee. On November 8, 2017, Dr. Sharp chaired the NCFA *Adoption Hall of Fame* at the Business Roundtable in Washington, D.C.

Vice Chairmen

Heidi Bruegel Cox, J.D., is the Executive Vice President and General Counsel at Gladney Center for Adoption. She has served the adoption community as an attorney for over 25 years and has worked with over 4,000 adoptions. She has been inducted into NCFA's Adoption Hall of Fame Award for outstanding commitment, service, and sacrifice for the cause of adoption.

Mrs. Cox previously served in the role of Secretary of the Board. She currently serves as the Chair of the Legislative and Government Affairs Committee and as a member of the Membership Committee and the Foster Care Committee.

Andrea T. Vavonese, Esq. is Division Counsel for Northrop Grumman Corporation. She has represented government contracting firms on all aspects of dealing with the federal government and has defended and prosecuted lawsuits, governmental investigations, and subpoenas. Ms. Vavonese is an adoptive parent and passionate advocate for children, also serving on the Board for the non-profit organization Developmental Connections, which supports families whose children have developmental disorders.

Ms. Vavonese also serves as Chair of the Foster Care Committee and as a member of the Legislative and Government Affairs Committee.

Secretary

Lisa A. Sinclair, Esq. is Vice President of Legal Affairs and Deputy General Counsel at Northeastern University in Boston, MA. She is a cum laude graduate of Mount Holyoke College and Boston College Law School. Prior to law school, Ms. Sinclair was a social worker with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, serving the needs of children and families in crisis. Ms. Sinclair and her husband adopted their daughter through foster care.

Ms. Sinclair also serves on the Audit and Risk Management Committee and the Foster Care Committee.

Treasurer

Phillip Littleton joined Holt International Children's Services in 2003 as Vice President of Marketing and Development. He now serves as President and CEO. He previously worked for what is now the world's largest marketing and communications agency exclusively serving nonprofit organizations—the Russ Reid Company in Southern California. Mr. Littleton and his wife adopted his two sons domestically at birth and a daughter through foster care.

As Treasurer, Mr. Littleton also serves as Chair of the Finance and Budget Committee.

Strategic Plan Coordinator

Jane H. Castanias was a trial attorney in Dallas, Texas, at the law firms of Johnson & Gibbs and Jones Day. Upon moving to Washington D.C. she has devoted her time to causes related to children. She

has served as Chair of the Board of Directors for RESOLVE, the national infertility association, and has also volunteered with the Gladney Center for Adoption and as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Mrs. Castanias and her husband are adoptive parents of two daughters.

Ms. Castanias also serves as Chair of the Development Committee and as a member of the Nominations Committee.

#

ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION

Founded in 1980, National Council For Adoption (NCFa) is a global adoption advocacy nonprofit that promotes a culture of adoption through education, research, legislative action, and collaboration. As the authoritative voice for adoption, NCFa's areas of focus include domestic infant adoption, adoption and permanency outcomes for youth in foster care, and intercountry adoption. Passionately committed to the belief that every child deserves to thrive in a nurturing, permanent family, NCFa serves children, birth parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families, and adoption professionals. In addition, we work tirelessly to educate U.S. and foreign government officials and policymakers, members of the media, and all those in the general public with an interest in adoption.

For more information, visit www.AdoptionCouncil.org.