



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **San Diego Theatres CEO Carol Wallace to Receive Founders Award for Transformational Leadership in Downtown San Diego**

**Downtown San Diego Partnership to honor Wallace's 45-year career advancing the city's tourism, cultural economy, and civic development**

**SAN DIEGO, CA — March 18, 2026** — San Diego Theatres announced today that President and CEO Carol Wallace will receive the Founders Award from the Downtown San Diego Partnership, recognizing her 45-year career helping shape the economic development, tourism economy, and cultural vitality of Downtown San Diego.

The Founders Award recognizes visionary leaders whose careers have made lasting contributions to strengthening Downtown San Diego. Wallace joins a distinguished group of past honorees that includes Joan and Irwin Jacobs, Dan Shea, and Gordon Carrier.

The award will be presented during the Partnership's Create the Future Awards Gala on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, adjacent to the San Diego Convention Center.

“Carol Wallace has played an extraordinary role in shaping the economic and cultural vitality of Downtown San Diego over the course of her career,” said Joe Martinez, Chair of the San Diego Theatres Board of Directors. “Her leadership across major civic venues has helped strengthen San Diego’s reputation as a world-class destination for conventions, tourism, and the performing arts.”

Wallace joined San Diego Theatres as President and CEO in 2018, where she oversees the operations, programming, and marketing of the historic Balboa Theatre and the San Diego Civic Theatre. During her tenure, she has strengthened organizational systems, expanded programming, and helped restore audience levels following the closure of both theatres during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since reopening, attendance and event activity have exceeded pre-pandemic levels. In 2024, Wallace spearheaded a series of community performances celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the historic Balboa Theatre.

Under Wallace’s leadership, San Diego Theatres recently completed a \$7.5 million refresh of the exterior paint and interior public spaces at the San Diego Civic Theatre, modernizing lobbies,

lounges, restrooms, and artist areas to enhance the guest experience while preserving the architectural character of one of the region's most important cultural venues.

Prior to joining San Diego Theatres, Wallace served for 25 years as President and CEO of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation, where she led the bayside facility and oversaw its strategic direction, management, and operations. Under her leadership, the Convention Center became one of the most successful facilities in the nation and gained international recognition in the meetings and conventions industry. Wallace oversaw the Phase II expansion of the facility and laid the groundwork for the current expansion efforts.

“Carol Wallace set the gold standard for convention center leadership during her tenure,” said Patricia McQuater, who served as Chair of the Board of Directors of the San Diego Convention Center Corporation during Wallace’s first year as President and CEO. “Her strategic vision, steady leadership, and deep commitment to San Diego elevated the Convention Center’s global reputation and strengthened the region’s tourism economy. This recognition is a well-deserved celebration of a career that has made a lasting impact on our city.”

Wallace’s career in venue management and destination development spans more than four decades and includes leadership roles with the Dallas Convention Center and the Colorado Convention Center before she came to San Diego in 1991.

Her contributions to the industry have earned numerous national honors, including the International Association of Venue Managers’ Charles A. McElravy Award for career achievement and induction into the *Venues Today* Hall of Honor.

“Downtown San Diego has been at the center of my professional life for more than three decades,” Wallace said. “It has been an honor to work alongside so many civic leaders, business partners, and arts organizations who share a commitment to strengthening the economic vitality and cultural life of our city.”

### **About San Diego Theatres**

*San Diego Theatres is the nonprofit organization that manages, markets, and operates the San Diego Civic Theatre and the Balboa Theatre on behalf of the City of San Diego. The organization presents and hosts a diverse range of performing arts and cultural events and serves as a major cultural anchor in Downtown San Diego.*

-END-

### **Media Contact**

Steven Johnson, Vice President  
San Diego Theatres  
steven.johnson@sandiegotheatres.org  
619-977-1862