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Global Minnesota Names Mark Ritchie President

Nationwide search yields worldly, collaborative leader and passionate Minnesota advocate

MINNEAPOLIS, November 20, 2018 – [Global Minnesota](#), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing international understanding and engagement, has named Mark Ritchie as its new president. He will assume his new post in January 2019.

Ritchie will succeed Carol Engebretson Byrne, who announced her plans to step down in July, after 21 years of service. Under Byrne's leadership, Global Minnesota created compelling programs statewide on important [global topics, advancing international understanding for thousands of Minnesotans](#) while tripling the organization's revenues. Today, Global Minnesota is one of the top [World Affairs Councils](#) in the nation.

The Global Minnesota board of directors selected Ritchie after conducting an in-depth, nationwide executive search. In his role as the leader of Minnesota USA Expo, Ritchie led the public-private partnership to host the 2023 World Fair Expo in Minnesota and is currently pursuing the 2027 bid.

"Mark brings strong expertise in international affairs and is a recognized advocate for Minnesota – we couldn't be more pleased to have him as Global Minnesota's next leader," said Ertugrul Tuzcu, Global Minnesota board chair. "As an effective cross-sector leader, his strategic acumen and drive will lead Global Minnesota into the next decade of the 21st century – and help raise Minnesota's profile in the world."

Ritchie's leadership experience spans government, nonprofit, education and advocacy organizations. In addition to creating a public-private partnership to host a World's Fair on health and wellness in Minnesota, he served as an endowed chair in agricultural food systems for the University of Minnesota.

Previous positions included consulting for the Carnegie Corporation of New York and serving as Minnesota's Secretary of State from 2007 to 2015.

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“I am inspired by the important mission of Global Minnesota – and truly impressed by the dedication of its board and staff, management and members,” said Ritchie. “For me, this is the opportunity of a lifetime, a chance to make a difference by bringing people together, broadening perspectives and building understanding – in Minnesota and around the world.”

As president and CEO of Minnesota USA Expo, Ritchie was recognized as an engaging and committed leader whose global responsibilities required him to collaborate with heads of state, United Nation’s committees, scholars, and corporate leaders.

Ritchie holds a master’s degree in public affairs from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, and serves on several boards, including the Minnesota Military Museum, Minnesota Historical Society and Lifesource. In 2000 and again in 2016, he won the Twin Cities International Citizen award. He was named a 21st Century Game Changer in Voting Rights by the NAACP. In 2011, Ritchie won the Dwight David Eisenhower Excellence in Public Service Award from Sister Cities International.

Global Minnesota is a membership organization with more than 2,000 individual members and 50-plus corporate members. Formerly the Minnesota International Center, it was founded in 1953 as a welcoming organization for international students and scholars. Since then, it has connected 15,000 international visitors with Minnesotans from all sectors.

Today, Global Minnesota offers a broad portfolio of programs, including professional exchanges, K-12 education programs, discussion groups, and public events. In 2017, Global Minnesota engaged thousands of Minnesotans with people and programs from 115 countries, including a group of 91 Fulbright scholars who traveled to Minnesota to study food security, meeting with local nonprofits, corporations, and farmers.

About Global Minnesota

Global Minnesota (www.globalminnesota.org) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, member-supported organization that connects individuals, organizations, and communities to the world. Through a unique series of programs offered across the state, Global Minnesota takes relevant and timely information on global issues, foreign policy, and cultural topics and provides the space and opportunity for Minnesotans to engage and discuss. Programs are designed for Minnesotans – from the 2nd grader to the CEO – to connect with others from around the globe, serve as citizen diplomats, and gain a deeper understanding of the world. Global Minnesota is in the top ten World Affairs Councils of America and received the Council of Ambassadors Award in 2014 from the Foreign Policy Association for expanding global discussion groups in Minnesota.