



Press Release
For Immediate Release

Friday, 28 April 2017

Directors UK announces new Chair of the Board

Directors UK, the professional association for British screen directors, bids a fond farewell to director Beryl Richards as Chair of the Directors UK Board and is pleased to announce that multi-camera director, Steve Smith, has been appointed as the new Chair.

Steve Smith will be taking over from Beryl who is stepping down after serving two and a half years in the post and having reached the maximum term of six years on the Board. Steve has been Vice-Chair of Directors UK for the past two years and on the Board for four years and brings a wealth of industry experience to the role.

Directors UK paid tribute to the outgoing chair, Beryl Richards, whose contribution has strengthened Directors UK's role as a campaigning organisation on issues such as gender, diversity, pay, copyright and on the importance of training and career development, on behalf of all directors. Beryl was particularly proactive in spearheading the gender equality campaigns for better representation of women directors, raising awareness of the issues and helping to improve employment prospects and opportunities for all women TV and film directors.

Incoming Chair, Steve Smith, is a BAFTA award-winning multi-camera and entertainment director who has helped create some of the UK's most popular television programmes, including *The Graham Norton Show*, *The Great British Bake Off – An Extra Slice*, *John Bishop in Conversation* and *Dara O Briain's Go 8 Bit*. Steve also works as a sustainable production consultant and is a BAFTA 'Albert Ambassador' promoting sustainability within the television industry and has been involved in training the future generation of directors.

Under the terms of the Directors UK constitution, members are only able to serve three consecutive terms on the board and Beryl is stepping down as Chair ahead of the Board elections in June to make way for the new Chair. Beryl will be continuing her work as an award-winning writer-director and is currently working on a number of projects.

Andrew Chowns, Directors UK's Chief Executive said: *"I would like to thank Beryl for all her work over the years. Her passion and drive to improve the working lives of all directors and in particular her work on tackling gender equality has had a significant impact. I want to thank her for her years of dedication, her energy, creativity and commitment to Directors UK. We are also delighted at the appointment of Steve Smith as our new Chair. With his knowledge of the industry, years of experience as a director and on the board he brings an understanding, enthusiasm and energy, which will be of enormous value to Directors UK and its members in our work ahead."*

Beryl Richards, outgoing Chair said: *"I would like to welcome Steve as the new chair, he is an excellent appointment. I am proud to have led the transformation of Directors UK into the strong campaigning organisation it has become, and of the work we have achieved to bring the issues affecting directors to the attention of the industry. It is important we continue to create opportunities and role models for future generations of directors. I would like to thank everyone for their support whilst I have been Chair, I have enjoyed serving my term and hope I have left Directors UK in a strong position to push through the many exciting changes in the future."*

New Chair, Steve Smith commented: *"I am delighted to be taking over as Chair of Directors UK – it is a great honour and privilege to be in the role in such an organisation. Beryl will be a tough act to follow, she has been an outstanding leader over the last two and a half years, and has done amazing work championing our campaigns on issues such as diversity, gender equality and supporting BAME directors. It's also imperative that Directors UK continues this important work to help the industry to be more diverse and inclusive. As an organisation we must also continue to evolve in order to protect and support freelance directors and their rights in a changing global media landscape. I look forward to helping meet these challenges in the years ahead."*

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Notes to Editors:

- Directors UK is the professional association of UK screen directors. It is a membership organisation representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,400 members - the majority of working TV and film directors in the UK. Directors UK collects and distributes royalty payments and provides a range of services to members including campaigning, commercial negotiations, legal advice, events, training and career development. Directors UK works closely with fellow organisations around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns, promotes excellence in the craft of direction and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.
- Under the terms of the Directors UK constitution, Board members are only able to serve three consecutive terms on the board. Board elections are held every two years.
- Beryl Richards directs Film, TV drama and comedy. In TV, as lead director, she's helped create many popular UK teens and kids series, for which she has been awarded 4 BAFTA's (*My Life as a Popat, Uncle Dad, The Ward*) and 2 International EMMY nominations, most recently in 2016 for *Secret Life of Boys*. She has recently won the 2016 Women in Film/ITV Achievement of the Year award for her gender equality campaigning
- Steve Smith is a BAFTA award-winning multi-camera and entertainment director. With over 30 years production experience. Steve's work includes *The Graham Norton Show, The Great British Bake Off – An Extra Slice, John Bishop in Conversation and Dara O Briain's Go 8 Bit*. Steve also works as a sustainable production consultant and is a BAFTA 'albert Ambassador' promoting sustainability within the television industry. In 2010 Steve became a BAFTA Youth Mentor and also works as an ambassador for the Public Service Broadcasting Trust advising on their ITV Fixers project.

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