



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS
CITY OF CHICAGO

July 6, 2016

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

In 2011, Mayor Emanuel invited me to join his administration as Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). What a ride! These past five years have been the most challenging and exciting of my career. With the help and support of the amazing DCASE team, we accomplished much: rebuilt the department; restored and reimagined many of the signature festivals and public programs; released the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; revealed hidden decorative features of the Chicago Cultural Center to showcase even more of its majestic beauty; and realized the very first-ever Chicago Architecture Biennial, among a host of other wonderful and new programs, services and events. With so much to be proud of behind me, I now look to the future and have decided to step down from my post. I am leaving my position as commissioner of DCASE to join the team at Navy Pier, Inc. as Chief Program and Civic Engagement Officer. My last day as commissioner is July 15, 2016.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for being so kind and supportive to me during my five-year tenure at what I believe is the most dynamic local arts agency in the nation. Since 2011, I have had the great fortune to work side by side with the most talented people in town. There is no staff *anywhere* that works harder or is more dedicated to delivering exceptional programs and services to our citizens than Team DCASE.

Under the leadership and guidance of Mayor Emanuel, DCASE has flourished. I will always be grateful to the Mayor for his unending support and will forever cherish my time spent as a public servant. DCASE has allowed me the opportunity to partner, connect and support the finest arts and cultural institutions in Chicago, as well as some of the most gifted and imaginative artists in the world. I am grateful that my new role will continue to keep me connected to so many of you and I look forward to building on past relationships and developing new ones.

I love this city. I love the arts. And I've loved my time at DCASE. It's been my great fortune to have a job that allowed me to pursue my passions all while being surrounded and inspired by creative, visionary people. My work was grounded with the goal of providing meaningful cultural experiences and extending resources to Chicago artists and communities and together, we've accomplished that. It all has been immensely rewarding and gratifying to me personally and professionally.

Words cannot express the state of my mixed emotions with this transition. But I leave confident knowing the department is in the very capable hands with the appointment of Mark Kelly as commissioner. I have long respected and admired his work at Columbia College Chicago in

nurturing students and cultivating future arts leaders of the next generation, and the many innovative programs and initiatives he has developed over the years to foster cultural vitality for our city. I hope you all will extend the same level of support and generosity to him as you have to me.

Again, thank you all for everything and I look forward to continuing our arts quest together in my new role at Navy Pier.

With warm regards and sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle T. Boone". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Michelle" being more prominent than the last name "Boone".

Michelle T. Boone
Commissioner, departing