

Lisa Richards Toney Bio

Lisa Richards Toney became President and CEO of APAP on July 1, 2020. Ms. Richards Toney brings more than 25 years of experience leading a range of small and large arts and humanities organizations, managing change, and building stability. Since 2020, Lisa has led APAP through the challenging pandemic years in which sustainability and strengthening the organization's business model became a core focus. Under her leadership, APAP launched one of the most dynamic virtual conferences for the industry and a host of innovative and topical virtual member-focused initiatives including the 10/20/30 Pledge for Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Real Talk In Real Time town hall-style member meetings, the Halsey North Mentoring Exchange, and other efforts to support the field during a time of uncertainty and change. She shepherded the organization and its membership in its return to the in-person APAP|NYC Conference in January 2023, and most recently stewarded APAP's five-year sustainability plan that begins its rollout in 2024-2025.

Lisa's vision for APAP and the field is simple – to provide members with the critical information and services needed to thrive as professionals in the North American presenting, booking and touring industry—now and in the future, as well as to affirm APAP's role as a national servant-leader member organization and to strengthen its purpose to the field, ensuring its lasting impact within the performing arts ecosystem.

Prior to APAP, Lisa served as Executive Director of the Abramson Scholarship Foundation, where she steered the foundation through a period of change management and growth in all areas with special attention to professional development opportunities for scholars in financial literacy, professional visioning, mental health wellness, and direct mentorship for those pursuing careers in the arts. As Deputy Director and later Interim Executive Director of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, she worked tirelessly on behalf of the diverse resident artists and arts organizations of the District of Columbia. Additional leadership roles include Director, Writers and Schools at the Pen/Faulkner Foundation; Director, Literature to Life (and Education) at The American Place Theatre, where she presented performances at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and The Library of Congress; and the first Executive Director of the Debbie Allen Dance Academy.

In Summer 2024, Lisa began writing a monthly column for International Arts Manager magazine—"A View From Here"—designed to share her point of view on topical issues in the performing arts. Throughout the years, she has enjoyed a plethora of speaking engagements at state, regional, national, and international

performing arts conferences, most recently in China and Romania, and the invitation to contribute to published articles and books. In September 2023, Ms. Richards Toney was named among industry luminaries to the first NYC Live Entertainment Industry Council by New York Mayor Eric Adams. She was also named one of "The Next 50" as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She was previously a booking and producing consultant for cellist Okorie "OkCello" Johnson and provided tour management and planning support for Moving Forward Dance Company/Dana Tai Soon Burgess. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Drama and English as a Presidential Scholar from Spelman College, a Master of Arts Degree as a John Beinecke Scholar in Arts Education from New York University and was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to study Black Dance in Britain, as well as a Vilar Arts Management Fellowship with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.