



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Pat Schneider

pat@flventure.org

813-335-8116

Kevin Burgoyne

kevin@flventure.org

305-343-0617

FLORIDA VENTURE FORUM ANNOUNCES FIRST-EVER FEMALE BOARD LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chair Carolyn Mathis and Vice Chair Jennifer Dunham will serve two-year terms, lead Florida's premiere venture and private equity organization

MIAMI & TAMPA, Fla – September 29, 2021 – [Florida Venture Forum](#), the largest statewide support and member organization for investors and entrepreneurs, today announced its slate of board officers for the 2021-2022 board term.

Carolyn Mathis, partner with Harbor View Advisors in Ponte Vedra, FL, will serve as board chair, and Jennifer Dunham, venture partner with Arsenal Growth Equity in Winter Park, FL, will serve as vice chair. The new chair-vice chair team marks the first all-female leadership team in the Forum's 37-year history. Mathis replaces outgoing Chair Travis Milks, managing partner with Topmark Partners, who served a two-year term as chair and will continue to serve on the Forum's executive committee.

"I am extremely honored to have been selected chair of the Florida Venture Forum and look forward to what promises to be one of the most exciting and dynamic years in the organization's history," said Carolyn Mathis. "As challenging as the past year has been, our organization not only survived but thrived, thanks to Travis's leadership and the hard work of our staff and my fellow members."

Diversity and inclusion have long been a challenge for the finance industry, in general, and venture capital in particular. In 2016 the Forum began a diversity and inclusion initiative that has resulted in significant growth in the diversity of its membership - and in the speakers and companies the organization features at its events. Specifically, female board membership has increased 800% since 2015, representing 20% of the organization's current overall board roster and 30% of its board officers.

"Research clearly shows that diversity is one of the key differentiators of a successful innovation ecosystem and the Forum will continue to do its part to make Florida one of the most attractive places to build fast growing companies and deploy capital," added Mathis.

Board officers for the 2021-2022 Board Term are:

- Chair Carolyn Mathis, partner, Harbor View Advisors
- Vice chair Jennifer Dunham, venture partner, Arsenal Growth Equity
- Treasurer Jeff Olender, partner, Cherry Bekaert
- Membership Steve Castino, shareholder, Vestal & Wiler
- Programming Mark Volchek, founding partner, Las Olas Venture Capital
- Selection Ben Patz, founder and managing partner, Deepwork Capital

The Forum's officers lead a board of nearly 50 members, including a "who's who" of venture capital and private equity leaders based in, or investing in, Florida. Members work closely with staff to identify promising fast growth companies and help connect them with capital sources and other services they need to grow and scale.

About the Florida Venture Forum: The Florida Venture Forum is Florida's largest statewide support organization for investors and entrepreneurs, helping fast-growth companies connect with sources of capital from across the country. Since 1984 more than 1500 companies have presented at Forum events and have gone on to raise upwards of \$11B in equity capital, producing billions more in economic value to Florida. The Forum's 250+ members represent a "who's who" of venture capital and private equity dealmakers, including equity and debt investors at all stages, as well as major law, accounting, and investment banking firms, and large corporates active in the innovation ecosystem. The Forum provides programs and programming statewide throughout the year in addition to hosting major annual conferences like the Florida Venture Capital Conference, the Statewide Collegiate Startup Competition, the Early Stage Capital Conference, and industry-focused events including aerospace and healthcare. For more information, visit: <http://www.flventure.org>.

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