



Berkshire Innovation Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ben Sosne
Berkshire Innovation Center
(917) 628-0483
ben@the-bic.org



Berkshire Innovation Center Welcomes Two New Directors

Pittsfield, MA (November 10, 2021) – The Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC) is pleased to announce the appointment of two new members to its Board of Directors: Julie Diop, Executive Director of the Initiative for Knowledge and Innovation in Manufacturing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Giovanna Fessenden, an attorney at the Intellectual Property law firm Hamilton Brook Smith Reynolds. Both are committed to the mission of the BIC and bring a range of expertise that will be critical to the BIC as the organization grows and evolves.

“Our Board of Directors is comprised of a dedicated team of community leaders dedicated to positioning the Berkshire Innovation Center (BIC) as a catalyst to accelerate the innovation and growth of advanced manufacturers and other technology-enabled companies in the region,” said Ben Sosne, Executive Director at the BIC. “I am so grateful to have Julie and Giovanna join our team and am excited to channel their talent, expertise and energy into furthering our mission.”

B. Stephen Boyd, Chair of the BIC’s Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer, Boyd Technologies, Inc., added, “We are delighted to have Giovanna and Julie join the Board. They both have deep knowledge of cutting-edge technologies and will be tremendous resources as we expand our programming and amplify the impact we make across the region. The Board is thrilled to be working with them.”

Julie Diop received her MBA in finance from the University of Chicago, and her MA in business journalism from New York University. From 2002 to 2016 she worked in journalism, first on the business desk at Newsday, and after that, as a producer on the nationally syndicated NPR show, On Point. In October 2016 she joined MIT’s Initiative



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for Knowledge and Innovation in Manufacturing (IKIM), which creates new education and training content, provides delivery platforms, supports manufacturing research programs, and develops national policy in advanced manufacturing workforce training. As executive director, she provides strategic guidance on all programs that IKIM runs, oversees a team of more than 30 people, and leads IKIM's fundraising strategy. She has secured more than \$30 million since 2016 from industry, government, and trade associations for MIT and partner organizations.

Giovanna Fessenden is a computer scientist, intellectual property attorney, and blockchain specialist with 17 years of experience advising high tech companies and startups in software patents, software product development, software licensing, open-source software licensing compliance, and intellectual property strategy. She helps Hamilton Brook Smith Reynolds maintain a presence in western Massachusetts by servicing clients in that area and all over the world. Since 2018, Giovanna has received the distinction of Best Lawyers in America® for her patent law expertise. For the past five years, she has also been ranked a top-rated Intellectual Property Attorney by Super Lawyers®, a rating of outstanding lawyers who have attained a high degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. Giovanna is the executive producer of TEDx Berkshires and has a TEDx talk on the Blockchain Revolution.

In addition, five members of the BIC's Board of Directors with expiring terms have agreed to continue serving: B. Stephen Boyd of Boyd Technologies, Scott Lundy of Sonoco Plastics, James Brosnan of McCann Technical School, Phil Dore of General Dynamics Mission Systems, and Peter Stasiowski of Interprint. All five were part of the core team that came together to form the organization and secure the support to build and open the new facility in Pittsfield.

About Berkshire Innovation Center

The Berkshire Innovation Center is a nexus for collaboration, thought leadership, and advanced R&D equipment, technology, and facilities. Our goal is to enable and accelerate the innovation capacity and growth potential of private industry in the life sciences, the life science supply chain, and advanced manufacturing, with the ultimate objective of spurring economic expansion, job creation, and investment in the region. To learn more about or to join the Berkshire Innovation Center, visit <https://berkshireinnovationcenter.com/>, like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/berkshireinnovationcenter>, follow us on Linked In <https://www.linkedin.com/company/berkshire-innovation-center/> and on Twitter at @BerkInnovation.

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