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Visual Effects Society Announces its 2016 Board of Directors Officers

Mike Chambers Re-Elected as Board Chair

Los Angeles February 22, 2016 – Today, the Visual Effects Society (VES), the industry’s global professional honorary society, announced its 2016 Board of Directors officers. The officers, who comprise the VES Board Executive Committee, were elected at the January 2016 Board meeting. The officers include Mike Chambers, who was re-elected as Board Chair.

“We are fortunate to have such esteemed leadership represented on the Executive Committee,” said Eric Roth, VES Executive Director. “Collectively, these talented professionals bring passion, diverse experience and enormous commitment to our organization. We look forward to Mike Chambers continued leadership in taking the organization and our global membership to new heights.”

The 2016 Officers of the VES Board of Directors are:

- Chair: **Mike Chambers**
- 1st Vice Chair: **Jeffrey A. Okun**
- 2nd Vice Chair: **Nancy St. John**
- Treasurer: **Susan Thurmond O’Neal**
- Secretary: **Rita Cahill**

Mike Chambers, Chair

Mike Chambers is an independent Visual Effects Producer and freelance VFX Consultant, specializing in large-scale feature film productions. He is currently in post-production on *Alice in Wonderland: Through the Looking Glass* for Walt Disney. He most recently completed work on *Transcendence*, the directorial debut of award winning cinematographer, Wally Pfister, following their collaborations on both *The Dark Knight Rises* and *Inception* for esteemed director Christopher Nolan & Warner Bros. Studios. Mike has contributed to the visual effects efforts on many Academy & BAFTA award-winning films, and he has personally won 2 VES Awards for Best Visual Effects, for *The Day After Tomorrow* and *Inception*, and has been nominated for his work on *I Am Legend*.

As a VFX Producer, Chambers has worked with many A-list producers and directors on numerous VFX-heavy feature films. His production credits include *I Am Legend*, *Surrogates*, *10,000BC*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Babe: Pig In The City*, *Strange Days* and *True Lies*. His consulting service clients include Paramount, Warner Bros, Disney/Touchstone, DreamWorks, Alcon Entertainment and Summit Entertainment. Earlier in his career, Chambers gained invaluable traditional filmmaking experience working for many seminal Hollywood figures and production companies. Roger Corman's New World

Pictures, Doug Trumbull's Showscan and Richard Edlund's Boss Films were among his first training grounds. He then moved on to freelance visual effects coordination, most notably on James Cameron's *The Abyss*. While working for Apogee Productions, Chambers began producing effects for feature films and special venue projects. Later, while serving as VFX Producer on *True Lies*, he was also a member of the team that created the then-new start-up VFX studio, Digital Domain. Some of his other early credits include *Die Hard*, *Big Top Pee Wee*, *Heart & Souls*, *Broken Arrow*, *Galaxy of Terror* and *Slumber Party Massacre*.

Chambers has been a member of the VES for almost 20 years, serving multiple terms on the Board of Directors, and is a former Vice Chair of the organization. He is also a member of the Producers Guild of America.

Jeffrey A. Okun, 1st Vice Chair

Jeffrey A. Okun, VES is currently working on Albert Hughes' *The Solutrean* for Studio 8 and Sony Pictures. He is known for creating 'organic' and invisible effects, as well as spectacular 'tent-pole' visual effects that blend seamlessly into the storytelling aspect of the project, and has won the VES Award for Outstanding Supporting Visual Effects for his work on *The Last Samurai*. Okun has also delivered wide-ranging effects in award winning films such as *Blood Diamond*, *Stargate*, *Sphere*, *Red Planet*, *Deep Blue Sea*, *Lolita* and *The Last Starfighter*. Additionally, he oversaw the rush 3D conversion of *Clash of the Titans*.

Okun was recently named a Fellow of the VES, as well as the recipient of the Founder's Award. He also created and co-edited, the *VES HANDBOOK OF VISUAL EFFECTS*, an award-winning reference book covering all aspects of creating visual effects, techniques and practices. As VES Board Chair for seven years, Okun fostered a global community and focused attention on bringing business and creative education to artists, facilities and studios. Under Okun's leadership the VES was a key player in the creation of a worldwide software anti-pirating alliance with the US Government to insure that all facilities have a fair and level playing field from which to bid.

Okun created the visual effects tracking and bidding software that is in wide use within the industry today, as well as the revolutionary visual effects techniques dubbed the "PeriWinkle Effect" (an underwater blue screen technique) and the "Pencil Effect" (which accurately predicts the final visual effects count and budget).

Okun is a member of the Visual Effects Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), the Academy of Television Arts and Science, and an associate member of the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC).

Nancy St. John, 2nd Vice Chair

Nancy St. John has help build VFX Facilities around the world over the last 30+ years and has Produced, Executive Produced and Consulted with a Who's Who of renowned VFX and Computer Animation facilities. The list includes Robert Abel & Associates, Digital Productions, Pacific Data Images (PDI), Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), Rhythm & Hues, MillFilm London and Prime Focus Vancouver.

As a VFX Producer and Consultant she has worked with many Studios including Disney, DreamWorks, Fox, HBO, Paramount, Walden Media, Warner Bros., Relativity Media, Oddlot Entertainment and Lionsgate. Most recently as Studio side VFX Producer she completed onset work for the highly anticipated new *Ghostbusters*, directed by Paul Feig with a cast of very funny Actresses that releases July 2016. St John was the Production side VFX Producer for Academy Award-winning films *Babe* and *Gladiator* and co-VFX Producer for the Academy Award nominee *I-Robot*. Her filmography also includes *James & the Giant Peach*, *Evolution*, *Life Aquatic*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Spirit*, *The Immortals*, *Limitless*, *Season of the Witch*, *Men in Black 3*, *Total Recall*, *Resident Evil* and *Ender's Game*.

St. John previously served as the VES 1st Vice Chair and is also a member of the Producers Guild of America.

Susan Thurmond O'Neal, Treasurer

With more than 18 years of experience in the visual effects industry, Susan Thurmond O'Neal has worked to build teams, track progress, inspire artistry and liaison for high-profile clients. Susan is currently working as a creative recruiter for BLT Recruiting, Inc and has worked as Ops Manager at The Mill, Ops Director at Escape Studios, and Account Manager at Side Effects Software, Inc (makers of Houdini). As head of production at RIOT Pictures, O'Neal managed artists and producers to ensure projects ran smoothly. Additionally, she has worked with Digital Domain, A52, creo collective, Zoic Studios, Radium FX and GMFX and other companies over the course of her extensive career. She has also worked on teams that have produced such films and projects as *T2:3D - Battle Across Time*, *Titanic*, *The Italian Job*, *West Wing*, *Six Feet Under* and a host of commercials.

O'Neal is Co-chair of the Education Committee, the Chair of the Membership Committee and creator of the ad hoc "Cross Pollination" Committee, whose mission is to explore industries parallel to VFX for employment opportunities for the VES membership.

Rita Cahill, Secretary

Rita Cahill is an international business and marketing/PR consultant for a number of US, Canadian, Asian and EU companies for animation and visual effects feature films. Current and former clients include VFX and animation companies Digital Domain, Look FX, Method Studios, Milk VFX, The Mill, The Orphanage, Rainmaker Animation, Rajtaru Studios, The Senate, Shade VFX, Shanghai Cartoon, Shanghai SFS Digital, Trixter Film, Vertigo Digital and Xing Xing Digital, along with industry related organizations Animation Mentor, Jiaflix Enterprises and Wuxi Studios. She is also a partner in

MakeBelieve Entertainment, a film development company and serves as Executive Producer on a number of international projects.

Previously, Cahill was the VP Marketing for Cinesite where she oversaw the marketing of four divisions of the pioneering digital studio's services. During her tenure, Cinesite completed work on over 200 feature films including the first DI in history, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Prior to Cinesite, Cahill co-founded the Mill Valley Film Festival/California Film Institute and remains on the Institute's Emeritus Board of Directors. Cahill was also the Founding Consultant on the formation and establishment of the Singapore International Film Festival.

This will be Cahill's second term as Secretary. Cahill has served as Chair or Co-Chair of the VES Summit for the past six years.

About the Visual Effects Society

The Visual Effects Society is a professional global honorary society dedicated to advancing the arts, sciences and applications of visual effects and to upholding the highest standards and procedures for the visual effects profession. It is the entertainment industry's only official organization representing the extended global community of visual effects practitioners, including supervisors, artists, producers, technology developers, educators and studio executives. VES' 3,000 members in more than 30 countries worldwide contribute to all areas of entertainment – film, television, commercials, animation, music videos, games and new media. To learn more about the VES, visit www.visualeffectssociety.com and follow us on Twitter: @VFXSociety.

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