



**For Immediate Release**  
**Wednesday, August 4, 2021**

**LDF Media**  
212-965-2200 / [media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

## **LDF Welcomes Angela Vallot and Kim Koopersmith as Historic New Co-Chairs of Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) today announced that Angela Vallot, Co-Founder and Partner at VallotKarp Consulting, and Kim Koopersmith, Chairperson of the law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Field LLP, will become the new co-chairs of LDF's Board of Directors. This marks the first time that women will lead the LDF Board. Ms. Vallot and Ms. Koopersmith will succeed Gerald Adolph, a retired global management consultant executive, and David Mills, a business leader and Professor at Stanford Law School, after more than 10 and 15 years of service, respectively. Vallot and Koopersmith will formally assume leadership of the LDF at the board's November Annual meeting:

"Angela Vallot and Kim Koopersmith have been invaluable members of LDF's Board of Directors for many years, serving on key committees, and contributing their vast knowledge and expertise to our work. Their deep commitment to racial justice and civil rights has been an integral part of their Board service and the tremendous impact they have had over the years," said Sherrilyn Ifill, LDF's President and Director-Counsel. "I am thrilled about what their leadership will bring to continuing to strengthen LDF well into the future, and for the historic nature of their election as the first women to lead our Board.

"In addition, I want to thank Gerald Adolph and David Mills for their many years of service to LDF and for their tireless leadership of the Board through what has been an increasingly challenging time in our nation – from the increased attacks on our democracy to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the communities we serve and on LDF as we transitioned to remote work over the past year. They have been invaluable partners and have guided the Board with a dedication that has enabled LDF to expand our impact in the areas of litigation and policy. It has been a true pleasure working alongside them during my time as Director-Counsel."

Outgoing Board Co-Chairs Mills and Adolph added that they "cannot imagine better choices to be co-chairs of the Board than Kim Koopersmith and Angela Vallot whose continued devotion to LDF and sage counsel has been invaluable over the years."

Angela Vallot has served on the LDF board for a decade. For much of that time, she has served as Chair of the Board's Development Committee. She is also on the Board of Directors of Xavier University of Louisiana and Suited, an A.I. powered assessment-driven recruiting network designed to equitably identify top diverse talent. She previously served on the Board of Trustees of Sentinel Group Mutual Funds for 23 years, where she chaired the Governance and Nominating Committee.

At VallotKarp Consulting, Ms. Vallot leads a firm that helps organizations create diverse, equitable and inclusive work cultures that allow everyone to fully contribute and thrive. The firm provides services to corporations, law firms, cultural institutions and other

organizations on a range of issues, including DEI strategic plans, culture assessments, cross cultural competency, identifying and interrupting unconscious bias, and dismantling systemic racism. Ms. Vallot works nationally and internationally on behalf of her clients.

In 1997, Ms. Vallot was recruited by the CEO of Texaco to become the first Chief Diversity Officer following the settlement of a \$176 million racial discrimination lawsuit. During her tenure at Texaco, she created and managed the Office of Corporate Diversity Initiatives, chaired the Corporate Diversity Council, and worked closely with the court-appointed Task Force on Equality and Fairness to help bring about a corporate makeover and develop policies and practices designed to ensure equal opportunity for all employees. She was later hired to become the first global Chief Diversity Officer of Colgate-Palmolive, where she worked with their global affiliates in South Africa and Brazil on developing and implementing locally relevant diversity and inclusion initiatives.

“I am deeply honored to be entrusted with co-chairing the board of the oldest civil rights organization in the country, alongside my good friend and colleague, Kim Koopersmith, whom I respect and admire,” said Ms. Vallot. “LDF’s work is more important than ever at this critical moment when so many of the hard-fought gains of the civil rights era are under assault.”

Ms. Koopersmith has been on LDF’s Board since 2015, serving on the Compensation, Pension, and Finance committees. As Chair of Akin Gump, Ms. Koopersmith has successfully led the 900-lawyer global firm for nearly a decade, guiding its strategic direction and enhancing the strength and culture of the firm. Throughout her tenure as Chair, she has been a leading voice on issues of diversity in the legal profession and the role of law firms in addressing racial injustice. She has also been a champion of the special responsibilities of members of the legal profession to provide pro bono legal services to those in need, and her firm has been recognized for aligning the firm’s pro bono work with racial justice issues.

Ms. Koopersmith has served as Chair of the Equal Justice Works Board, an organization funding fellowships for law students pursuing public service careers and remains a member of the board. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Her Justice, an organization dedicated to assisting women in poverty. Ms. Koopersmith has been recognized on numerous occasions for her law firm leadership and her focus on DEI and pro bono in the legal profession.

“Co-chairing the Board of LDF is one of the greatest honors of my legal career,” said Ms. Koopersmith. “This is an organization I care deeply about and our firm’s long history of involvement with LDF – starting with Vernon Jordan’s many years of service on the LDF board – makes this honor even more special. To take on this opportunity with Angela Vallot, a professional colleague and good friend, leaves me humbled and filled with a sense of possibility. There is much to be done and I couldn’t have a better co-chair for the challenging road ahead.”

###

*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to*

*shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).*