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**SECOND ANNUAL HOME FURNISHINGS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE ADDRESSES ROLE  
LEADERS PLAY IN BUILDING PRODUCTIVE BUSINESS CULTURES**

**HIGH POINT, N.C., Feb. 27, 2023** – The American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame kicked off its second annual Leadership Institute for emerging industry leaders on Feb. 19 at High Point University in partnership with their Executive Education program.

The four-day event, which ran Feb. 19-22, was designed to nurture and accelerate the growth of leadership in the home furnishings industry. Participating in this year's Institute are 25 emerging leaders, selected from a nominated pool of candidates nationwide and across a wide range of roles within the home furnishings industry.

As part of the learning experience, this year's Leadership Institute included a series of keynote interviews and challenge questions for interactive discussions with four distinguished industry leaders. Throughout these sessions, Institute participants explored a central defining question: What is the role of a leader in shaping and protecting an effective and productive culture? Building on these discussions, the event also involved case studies with participants presenting solutions to a panel of judges.

Three of the keynote interview sessions featured inducted members of the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame: Neil Goldberg, chairman of Top 10 furniture and mattress retailer Raymour & Flanigan; Steve Pond, founder of *Furniture Today*; and Gordon Segal, co-founder of lifestyle retailer Crate and Barrel. A fourth keynote interview will be conducted with Caroline Hipple, president of Norwalk Furniture and 2023 chairman of the American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Foundation.

In addition, Leadership Institute participants will learn about the case for building a high-trust culture with David Horsager, High Point University's Trust Expert in Residence as well as receive a detailed update on the economy and inflation from Matthew Martin, a regional executive at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. The participants got a sneak peak of the New American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame building in downtown High Point which will officially open this April 2023.

Dr. Daniel Hall, Dean of the Phillips School of Business interviewed the keynotes. Select faculty from High Point University's Phillips School of Business also led a combination of lectures and discussions on the topic of defining, building, and protecting a productive culture during the Leadership Institute. Participants engaged with close to 500 Phillips School of Business students in seven discipline-targeted Executive Education Career Panels. This was done in partnership with Andy Bills, Senior Vice President of Career and Professional Development, Student Success, and Executive Education, and his team.

Fashioned after the prestigious Harvard Business School Seminar for the Young President's Organization and Chief Executives Organization – attended by many leaders in the home furnishings

industry – the Home Furnishings Leadership Institute is founded on the power and impact of peer learning gained through focused tutorials.

“This class is made up of proven leaders, innovators and achievers who aspire to greater achievement and impact within their companies, their industry and their communities,” says Karen McNeill, CEO and President of the Hall of Fame Board of Directors. “Each was challenged by inducted members of the Hall of Fame to think differently about the meaning and impact of company cultures through a series of candid discussions. The lessons these young leaders learn, and the relationships that they forge, through these exchanges benefit both their companies — and the industry.”

A critical element of the mission of the Hall of Fame is to inspire a new class of leaders, McNeill adds. “We are impressed with what each of these young leaders has already achieved and look forward to seeing where they will lead the industry – as individuals and as a group – in the future.”

The 25 members of this year’s class of the Home Furnishings Institute are: Emily Boyst, Senior Director of Licensing and Special Projects, Hooker Furnishings; Cleo Cary, Director of Product Development, Global Views; Alex Cihak, Vice President of Business Development, Elements International; Laura Forsythe, Senior Vice President of Merchandising, Ashley Furniture Industries; Ronnie Fultz, Sales Analyst, Hooker Furnishings; Anderson Gibbons, Chief Marketing Officer, STI/Revolution Performance Fabrics; Adam Goldberg, Vice President of Marketing, Raymour & Flanigan; Sydney Marie Harris, Director of Organizational Development, Furnitureland South; Michael Herschel IV, Marketing Director, Furniture Marketing Group; Jill Johnson, Vice President of Marketing, Tempur Sealy; Scott Kahan, Business Development, Regal Fabrics; Alex Macias, Vice President, Del Sol Furniture; Ryan Mahoney, Senior Vice President of Furniture Leasing, International Market Centers; Molly Mays, National Account and Development Manager, Uttermost; Damian Pherigo, Vice President, C.S. Wo & Sons; Jessica Phillips, Vice President of Business Development, Phillips Collection; Troy Pittenger, Vice President of Finance, Norwalk Furniture; Shane Pohlman, Director of Furniture, Nebraska Furniture Mart; Bennett Rasmussen, Controller, R.C. Willey; Bo Stump, Partner, Stump & Co.; Garland Turner, Vice President of New Projects, 1915 South; Travis Wagner, Senior Vice President of Global Manufacturing, Ashley Furniture Industries; Gifty Clark Walker, Director of Merchandising and Sourcing, Joybird Furniture; Cameron Wanek, Senior Vice President of Supply Chain Planning and Business Analytics, Ashley Furniture Industries; and Erin Weir, Co-Founder, Pearl Collective.

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The American Home Furnishings Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc., is an industry-wide organization founded to preserve its history, to celebrate exceptional individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the U.S. home furnishings industry, to inspire the next generation of innovative leaders and to engage the community with the world of home furnishings. In 2019, the organization purchased a building at 311 S. Hamilton St. in High Point. Our new home will be a symbol of the Home Furnishings Capital of the World™ where the industry gathers, where we tell our story and learn from our past, and where we inspire future generations. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, funds support our history and leadership programming. The organization currently is based in High Point, North Carolina, at 202 Neal Place, Suite 101, and can be reached at 336.882.5900. Watch for ongoing developments and details about the grand opening of a new permanent home at [www.homefurnishingshalloffame.com](http://www.homefurnishingshalloffame.com) in April 2023.

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