



Jazz St. Louis has a long history in St. Louis. It has been and is committed to performance, education, and community engagement—on the local, regional, and national levels. After an extensive national search and interview process, we announced the appointment of distinguished musician, composer, and educator, Victor Goines as our new President and Chief Executive Officer. He began in the position September 2022. As we look to the future of Jazz St. Louis, we were then and remain excited to have Victor at the helm with his extensive knowledge and connections to the jazz world — nationally and internationally. His career in education and history of building programs with such storied institutions as Northwestern University and The Juilliard School positions him perfectly to lead JSL at this time. We are fortunate to have a leader of such stature, integrity, and commitment at the head of JSL.

A renowned jazz saxophonist and clarinetist, Victor Goines has been a member of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (JLCO) and the Wynton Marsalis Septet since 1993 and was recommended for our position by Marsalis. A son of New Orleans, Victor's lengthy and impressive music career has more than 200 original works to his credit as a composer; and as a performer, he appears on numerous film scores including Ken Burns' *Jazz*. In addition to his tenure with the JLCO, Victor Goines has performed with some of the top names in music including, among others, Terence Blanchard, Bob Dylan, Dizzy Gillespie, Dianne Reeves, Branford Marsalis, Diana Ross, Wayne Shorter, Chucho Valdez, and Stevie Wonder.

Prior to coming to St. Louis, he served as Director of Jazz Studies and a tenured Professor of Music at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Over the 14 years working at Northwestern, he rebuilt the Jazz Studies program to be one of the top programs nationally and internationally. Before that, Victor Goines served for seven years as Artistic Director of Jazz Studies at The Juilliard School and created the curriculum and vision for what is now. He has served as an Education Consultant to Jazz at Lincoln Center since 1995.

As soon as he arrived, he established a welcoming environment, working tirelessly to engage staff, volunteers, local musicians, donors and our audiences – always listening and creating an environment where multiple perspectives were encouraged, and differences were discussed. He has been a consistent supporter of women in jazz. His dissertation research is on that very subject, and his own jazz groups prominently feature women artists.

Clearly, certain individuals have not responded well to his more direct leadership style. That some would not respond well is not at all surprising. In any organization, changes in leadership necessitate a period of adjustment as people need to acclimate to new styles, expectations, and processes. Turnover is not unusual for organizations going through such a transition. That said, the allegations and accusations described in various venues are entirely baseless and without merit.

It is unfortunate that differences are being aired in a public forum – as opposed to being discussed respectfully and constructively in collaborative settings. This is a distraction for the community and the vast supporters of JSL. We remain committed to the mission of Jazz St. Louis and its three-pronged focus on excellence in performance, education, and community engagement.

I, and the Board of Directors, stand completely behind Victor Goines, and we hope the entire St. Louis Jazz Community will join us in that show of support. Please direct any questions, comments, concerns to my attention at [info@jazzstl.org](mailto:info@jazzstl.org).

Thank you in advance for your support for jazz, Jazz St. Louis, and St. Louis.

Sincerely,  
Bill Higley, Board Chair