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**DePriest Waddy Named CEO of Families First  
Selection Represents a New Chapter for the Georgia Nonprofit**

Families First, one of Georgia's oldest nonprofits serving at-risk families and children, announced the appointment of DePriest Waddy as the new Chief Executive Officer, effective September 16, 2019. He succeeds Marybeth Leamer, who served as interim CEO for the past year.

Waddy brings more than 30 years of executive experience to Families First. He has leadership expertise with nonprofits and Fortune 500 corporations in strategic fundraising, operations and marketing. He currently serves as Executive Director of the Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity in Birmingham, AL, one of the state's largest community action agencies with a budget of more than \$30 million and 500 employees.

His unanimous selection as CEO is the culmination of a national, year-long search that yielded more than 50 candidates.

"By hiring DePriest, Families First has gained a CEO who has the attributes necessary to lead this organization into the future at a time of significant change in the social services sector," said Delmont Early III, chair of the organization's Board of Directors. "His deep understanding and passion for strengthening families and children, coupled with his commitment to build relationships and transform the services and programs we offer to make them more impactful now and for generations to come, is what set him apart from the other candidates."

Leonard Adams, CEO of Quest Communities and a member of the search committee, echoes those sentiments. "DePriest is the right leader at the right time for Families First," said Adams. "I am looking forward to partnering with Families First under his leadership and, together, helping lead transformational change for families throughout Atlanta and the state of Georgia," Adams said.

One of the first steps Waddy will take when he comes on board is to meet with key stakeholders and leaders in business, civic and government entities, to listen to concerns and discuss strategies to ramp up services for at-risk families. From that, he will develop a comprehensive action plan to share with the Board.

"I am honored to join Families First," said Waddy. "This is a dynamic time in the history of the organization as it approaches its 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The strains on the adoption and foster care systems and the long-term transformational changes occurring among families in Atlanta and throughout the state means there is endless work and endless opportunities for Families First to help the most vulnerable."

"I look forward to working with the Board, our partners, the community and staff to formulate a compelling vision for the organization's next chapter."

Waddy is eager to return to Atlanta nonprofit leadership where he has maintained strong professional ties as the former Regional Director of United Way of Greater Atlanta; Director of Business and Corporate Partnerships at

Year-Up; CEO of Prevent Child Abuse; and Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President of Big Brothers Big Sisters Atlanta, to name a few.

Waddy has a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Kennesaw State University and a Bachelor's of Science degree from the University of Alabama. He and his wife, Carol, a former Families First board member, have one married daughter and granddaughter.

-30 -

For more information on DePriest Waddy visit: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/depriest-waddy-2725864/>

For more information on Families First visit: <https://www.familiesfirst.org>