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Fresno Regional Foundation Selects Experienced Leader as CEO

FRESNO, Calif – The Fresno Regional Foundation board of directors appointed Hugh J. Ralston as the organization's next president and CEO on Wednesday.

The current president and CEO of the Ventura County Community Foundation, Ralston has been a leader in the financial and philanthropic world, having served as president of two $100 million-plus foundations over the past 15 years, as well as a vice president in private banking at J.P. Morgan & Co.

Ralston, 56, will start in late October.

"We are thrilled to have Hugh join our efforts," said Carole Andersen, chair of the Fresno Regional Foundation's board of directors. Andersen also chaired a selection committee which included board members and community representatives.

"Hugh's record at the Ventura County Community Foundation, with its $100 million growth in assets, brings a sense of the possibilities for community philanthropy which accord with the board's strategic direction. Hugh also led the development of a Community Benefit Organization training center and the expansion of its grantmaking, scholarships, and community leadership programs," Andersen said.

"It is a privilege to be selected by the Fresno Regional Foundation board as its next CEO," said Ralston. "This area of our state is part of the next great chapter of the California dream, and I am thrilled to be working with the board and staff to explore and realize its ambitions for this region and for the work of the foundation."

Ralston's leadership at VCCF reflects 11 years of transformative growth, most recently the successful opening of the VCCF Nonprofit Center in Camarillo that houses 15 Community Benefit Organizations (CBOs) at below-market rent and provides free community meeting space. It also

is headquarters to VCCF's Center for Nonprofit Leadership, where staff, board and volunteers attend more than 180 workshops annually on an array of leadership topics.

Ralston also has 20 years of experience as a board member for a number of California CBOs and educational institutions, with a focus on education, arts & culture, and philanthropic opportunities. He served recently as the president of the board of the Community Foundations National Standards Board, a support organization of the Council on Foundations in Washington, D.C. which implements accreditation standards for US Community Foundations.

The descendant of a California agricultural family, Ralston is an avid gardener and singer, most recently with the Los Robles Master Chorale, based in Ventura County. His wife, Elizabeth, is on the faculty of the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising in Los Angeles, and is an accomplished landscape designer.

"We look forward to our community meeting and working with Hugh and his colleagues at FRF as we move forward with our plans to build community in this region," Andersen said.

About Fresno Regional Foundation
Founded in 1966, FRF improves the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley through philanthropy. It serves Fresno, Madera, Merced, Mariposa, Tulare and Kings Counties.

FRF is the trusted link between donors and organizations investing in permanent, high-impact initiatives for the San Joaquin Valley. The Foundation holds assets of over $55 million and awarded $6.3 million in grants in 2013.

For more information about the Fresno Regional Foundation, please visit fresnoregfoundation.org or call 559-226-5600**.**