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Lilly Endowment Announces New Vice Presidents

INDIANAPOLIS – Lilly Endowment has named two new vice presidents. Ben W. Blanton, a partner with Faegre Baker Daniels law firm in Indianapolis, will become vice president and general counsel. Peter A. Buck, the Endowment’s controller and director of diversified investments, has been named vice president for investments.

For more than 30 years, Blanton has provided legal counsel with respect to the structure, governance and operation of nonprofit organizations; federal and state income, property and sales tax exemptions; and compliance with various tax, legal and regulatory requirements; as well as charitable giving, endowments, philanthropy, institutional investing and related matters. His clients have included large and small private foundations, trusts, museums, churches, colleges and universities, fraternities and sororities, business leagues, community foundations and other nonprofit enterprises. He also has significant experience working with governmental agencies in the areas of public finance, bidding requirements, open door and public records issues, and related topics.

Blanton has served on the boards of numerous nonprofit organizations, including Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation, the Clowes Fund, Pacers Foundation and Noble of Indiana.

A native of Memphis, Tenn., Blanton joined Faegre Baker Daniels in 1982. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University Law School (J.D.) and Memphis State University (now University of Memphis).

“As Lilly Endowment’s lead counsel for nearly 25 years, Ben has consistently provided superb legal advice for the Endowment itself and in so doing has helped countless other organizations as they engaged with the Endowment to identify and analyze their own legal issues and needs,” said N. Clay Robbins, the Endowment’s chairman, president and chief executive officer. “The Endowment is most fortunate that he has agreed to join its staff. His deep knowledge of the Endowment and commitment to its mission and work will be most valuable.”

Blanton will join the Endowment staff in October.

Buck began his employment at the Endowment in 2015 as controller after nearly 15 years in public accounting, most recently as an audit director with the Indianapolis accounting firm of Katz, Sapper & Miller. While with the firm he served a variety of clients, including many in the nonprofit and governmental sectors. In 2016, he became the Endowment's director of diversified investments. Buck is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and of the Indiana Society of Certified Public Accountants. He serves on the audit and finance committee of United Way of Central Indiana.

A native of Nappanee, Ind., Buck is a 2001 graduate of the University of Indianapolis.

“Pete has brought to the Endowment a high level of expertise in finance and accounting, especially in the context of tax-exempt organizations,” Robbins said. “He has impeccable character and an impressive work ethic, and he is dedicated to the Endowment's mission and the causes it supports. The Endowment will greatly benefit from his keen intellect and financial acumen.”

About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J. K. Lilly and his sons, J.K. Jr. and Eli, through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.