

## **BONNIE ROSS TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE AIAS HALL OF FAME AT THE 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL D.I.C.E. AWARDS**

### *Celebrating the Steward of Halo and Leader in STEM Education*

LOS ANGELES – December 18, 2018 - The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS) is pleased to announce its 23<sup>rd</sup> Hall of Fame recipient, Bonnie Ross, Microsoft Corporate Vice President and Head of 343 Industries which oversees the Halo franchise. Ross has been integral in the vision and expansion of the Halo franchise that has continued to excite generations of fans, generating nearly \$6 billion in worldwide sales to date and has transcended video games to grow into a global entertainment phenomenon. Ross is a key voice in promoting STEM and diversity efforts across the gaming industry amongst women, under-represented minorities and children.

“It is thanks to Bonnie’s vision and drive for combining art and technology that has allowed the Halo universe to flourish within so many different mediums and platforms,” said Meggan Scavio, President, Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences. “That along with her deep passion to expand diversity in gaming and encourage STEM education amongst women as well as all young people is truly inspirational. Her positive legacy and leadership have helped advance interactive entertainment and will impact game makers and aspiring game makers for generations to come.”

The 2019 Hall of Fame Award will be presented to Ross during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual D.I.C.E. Awards ceremony on Wednesday, February 13, 2019, at the Aria Convention Center in Las Vegas by her long-time colleague and friend, Phil Spencer, Executive Vice President and Head of Gaming at Microsoft. The ceremony will once again be hosted by Jessica Chobot of *Nerdist News* and Greg Miller of *Kinda Funny*, and live streamed in its entirety beginning at 8:00 pm PT/11:00 pm ET via multi-year media partner IGN Entertainment.

“It’s been a privilege to work alongside Bonnie for more than two decades, and I have continually been impressed not only by her passion for merging art and storytelling, but also her equal passion for creating teams and technical breakthroughs; solid foundations that will set the direction of Halo and Xbox for years to come,” said Spencer. “Bonnie’s tenure at Microsoft is more than just a model for aspiring game makers, it’s a proof of concept that bringing together talented and diverse voices around a shared, passionate vision, can unleash worlds, wonders and legends that define entertainment for generations.”

Ross’ interest in technology and gaming began at an early age, where her pursuit of advanced math and science classes led to a degree in Technical Communication and a concentration in Physics and Computer Science. Following college, she landed an internship at IBM before beginning her profession at Microsoft, first working on operating systems.

Ross began her career in the games industry in 1994, when Microsoft created a PC sports gaming division, leading to her first game release of *NBA Full Court Press* for Windows. She progressed her career in gaming in a variety of roles, including producer, lead producer, executive producer and general manager overseeing production for all titles within the Microsoft Game Studios portfolio. In these roles, Ross worked with several leading development studios in the co-development or publishing of many well-known titles, including *Counter-Strike* (Xbox), *Dungeon Siege*, *Fuzion Frenzy*, *Gears of War*, *Jade Empire*, *Mass Effect*, *NBA: Inside Drive*, *Pandora’s Box*, *Psychonauts*, and *Zoo Tycoon*.

In 2007, when Halo creators, Bungie, parted ways with Microsoft as a first-party developer, Ross founded 343 Industries, an entertainment studio committed to fostering the growth and expansion of the Halo franchise, as well as driving innovation across Microsoft platforms. That commitment to building diverse stories and characters has helped 343 Industries create immersive, blockbuster sci-fi entertainment experiences within the Halo universe. At Microsoft Game Studios and 343 Industries, she has worked with or directly overseen many well-loved Halo games: *Halo 3: ODST*, *Halo: Reach*, *Halo: Combat Evolved Anniversary*, *Halo: Spartan Assault*, *Halo: Spartan Strike*, *Halo 4*, *Halo: The Master Chief Collection*, *Halo 5: Guardians*, *Halo Wars 2*, *Halo: Fireteam Raven*, and the upcoming *Halo Infinite*.

Ross is passionate about bringing together art and technology to transform how people experience entertainment. Over the last nine years, she pushed to broaden franchise reach and define Halo as a leader in transmedia across the entire entertainment industry, including the Halo series of video games, the upcoming Halo television series by SHOWTIME, and live-action series, such as *Halo: Forward Unto Dawn* and *Halo: Nightfall*. In addition, 12 of 17 Halo novels have been named to the New York Times Best Sellers list and Halo consumer products have generated over \$1.5 billion in consumer spend.

Ross is also deeply involved in promoting efforts to drive diversity across the games industry and generating interest amongst women, minorities and children in the pursuit of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers. In 1997, she co-founded the Microsoft [Women in Gaming](#) community as a way for women in the industry to network and support each other. Beginning as a small cocktail event with roughly 20 attendees, it has since then grown to become an annual lunch at the Game Developers Conference (GDC) that counts more than 1,500 in attendance.

Ross was named one of Fortune's most powerful women in gaming and is a key part of The Ad Council's "She Can STEM" campaign.

The AIAS Hall of Fame honor is bestowed on game creators who have been instrumental in the development of highly influential games and moving a particular genre forward. These individuals demonstrate the highest level of creativity and innovation, resulting in significant product influence on a scale that expands the scope of the industry. Past AIAS Hall of Fame recipients include: Todd Howard (2017), Hideo Kojima (2016), Leslie Benzies (2014), Dan and Sam Houser (2014) and Tim Sweeney (2012). Additional Hall of Fame honorees can be found at: [http://www.interactive.org/special\\_awards/index.asp](http://www.interactive.org/special_awards/index.asp).

Tickets to the 2019 D.I.C.E. Summit and 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual D.I.C.E. Awards can be purchased at [www.dicesummit.org](http://www.dicesummit.org).

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