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Lights on Tampa 2015 Kickoff Held at Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP

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Lights on Tampa 2015 Kickoff Held at Tampa law firm

May 15, 2014 / Tampa, Fla. — The Tampa office of Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP (SLK) played host to more than two dozen of the city's cultural and civic leaders—including Mayor Bob Buckhorn—during a May 8 kickoff event for Lights on Tampa 2015. The gathering brought together representatives from several major arts organizations and festivals, as well as some of Tampa's biggest companies.

Lights on Tampa began in 2006 with the idea of inviting artists to illuminate the buildings and amenities of downtown Tampa in colorful and creative ways. That first edition brought 20,000 city residents and visitors to downtown; out of the eight light installations created that year, two have become permanent fixtures of the downtown environment.

Since then, the event has taken place three times: in 2009, 2011 and 2012, years chosen so that the light displays would coincide with major Tampa events like the 2009 Super Bowl and the 2012 Republican National Convention. Each installation has garnered international media attention and interest, and because of the program's emphasis on new media work, Americans for the Arts recognized Lights on Tampa as one of the most significant art programs in the United States in the last half-century.

SLK Partner Julio Esquivel serves as head of the committee in charge of the 2015 edition of Lights on Tampa, scheduled to take place Feb. 20 and 21, 2015. He and City of Arts Program Manager Robin Nigh acted as hosts for the luminaries who attended the kickoff event, introducing them to the concept behind Lights on Tampa and giving them a sneak peek at some of the installations planned for next year.

Lights on Tampa 2015 will take place along the Tampa Riverwalk, with a focus on the then-newly completed Kennedy Boulevard Plaza, Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park, Kiley Gardens and MacDill Park. The two-day event will serve as an unofficial kickoff for Gasparilla Arts Month, when Tampa will host the Gasparilla art, music

and film festivals.

Among the artists set to participate is Nick Cave, a Chicago-based artist whose work combines elements of sculpture, installation, video, sound and performance art. For Lights on Tampa, he is hoping to revamp "Heard•NY," a performance and music piece that took over New York's Grand Central Station in 2013. Another proposed display for 2015 is the "Sky Striker," which will allow visitors swinging a mallet to shoot light up Rivergate Tower like a carnival game, and another will feature malleable light furniture. Each previous edition of Lights on Tampa has included at least one piece that has remained a permanent part of downtown Tampa; one or two of 2015's installations will likely become permanent, as well.

Each Lights on Tampa event also features extensive educational outreach, with initiatives that invite students to sharpen their visual literacy and critical thinking. Educational handouts and brochures and artists' lectures and workshops all play a role in each Lights on Tampa.

Mayor Buckhorn told those gathered at SLK that Lights on Tampa and projects like it have revitalized downtown Tampa, helping the city retain talented young people after years of losing them to other urban areas.

"This has become a cool place," said Buckhorn, citing the high demand for downtown condos and apartments. "Events like Lights on Tampa make a difference." Tourists and native Tampanians alike are marveling at how the downtown area has been transformed into a "signature place," Buckhorn said. "Tampa's got its swagger back."

In addition to his work for Lights on Tampa, Esquivel serves on the boards of the Tampa Public Art Alliance, the Gasparilla Music Festival, the Tampa Theatre and the Tampa Museum of Art.

"Events like Lights on Tampa make our downtown core a more vibrant place," says Esquivel. "With each edition of this special festival, we are helping to permanently remake and energize our city."

Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick is a full-service business law firm with more than 225 lawyers, 55 paralegals and 475 employees in five offices: Toledo and Columbus, Ohio; Tampa and Sarasota, Fla.; and Charlotte, N.C. In each of its markets, Shumaker is the premier provider of quality legal services to individuals, small businesses, health care providers, nonprofits and Fortune 500 and international corporations.

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