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The Mast Cell Disease Society Announces New Leadership

STERLING, MA – It is with great pleasure that The Mast Cell Disease Society, Inc. (TMS) announces new leadership. Former National Security Agency (NSA) Senior Executive Ms. Judith Kain Emmel was elected to serve as Chair of the Board starting 11 January 2023 and Ms. Jessica Fraser, longtime nonprofit advocate, was selected as the new Executive Director, starting 13 February 2023.

TMS Vice Chair, Research Dr. Celeste Finnerty said, “Judi and Jessica bring such enthusiasm and a wealth of varied experiences to TMS. Their energy will be well utilized in helping to fulfill our mission of transforming the lives of patients and families while finding cures for mast cell diseases. I am excited for what the future holds.”

Ms. Emmel joined the Board in 2021 and brings extensive experience in public administration, board development, and leadership. Having served as a Senior Executive at the NSA for 37 years, Ms. Emmel consistently broke down barriers achieving many firsts for women in the defense and intelligence communities. She has been awarded numerous accolades including the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement, the Federal Executive Board’s Outstanding Supervisor Award, the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the Superior Civilian Service Medal, and the US Secretaries of State award for her exemplary service to state governments. In addition to her new board position, Ms. Emmel currently serves as a Commissioner on the Maryland Commission for Women and the Governor’s Workforce Board. She is an alumnus of Rutgers University and the University of Southern California. “It is a privilege to lead the TMS Board and serve the mast cell disease community. There is so little awareness about the afflictions caused by mast cells, and we must change

that. I am committed to providing critical support to patients with mast cell diseases such as mastocytosis and mast cell activation syndromes, to physicians, and to caregivers as we work toward a better understanding of, and cure for, these debilitating and rare diseases,” Ms. Emmel shared.

TMS is also pleased to welcome its new Executive Director, Ms. Jessica Fraser. “I’m thrilled for the opportunity to help TMS accomplish its mission. Having lost a loved one to a mast cell disease, I know firsthand what is at stake for mast cell disease patients and their families,” Ms. Fraser said. She joins TMS with nearly 15 years of experience in nonprofit management, research, coalition building, and issue-based advocacy. In addition to her leadership role at the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute, Ms. Fraser has served on numerous nonprofit boards and was named one of the *Indianapolis Business Journal’s 40 under 40* in 2019. In service to the mast cell disease community, she will leverage her expertise in consensus building and her skills as a strengths-based leader to expand TMS’ capacity to provide direct service, and to ensure that TMS remains a national and international leader in mast cell disease research, education, and advocacy.

Finally, TMS staff and board expressed their gratitude to retiring Board Chair Valerie Slee, RN, B.S.N. in a celebration on January 10, 2023, where she was awarded the “Presidential Service Lifetime Achievement Award”. Within TMS, Mrs. Slee volunteered in many capacities, including 20 years serving on the board first as Vice Chair and then as the Board Chair, where she led TMS through transformation and growth into the organization that it is today.

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About The Mast Cell Disease Society

The Mast Cell Disease Society. Inc. (formerly known as The Mastocytosis Society) was founded in 1995 and is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing multi-faceted support to patients, families, and medical professionals in the mast cell

disease community and to leading the advancement of knowledge and research in mast cell diseases through education, advocacy, and collaboration.

In its more than 25 year history, TMS has served the mast cell disease community by helping to advance both the clinical and scientific boundaries of mast cell disease care and treatment options. For more information or to donate, please visit the TMS web page at tmsforacure.org.