

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 7, 2021

Contact: Ann Taylor

Anntaylor49@gmail.com

434-249-2505



EMILY COURIC
LEADERSHIP FORUM

Trail blazing venture capitalist and philanthropist, Sonja Hoel Perkins, to speak at April 11, 2022 Emily Couric event.

Charlottesville, Virginia – The Emily Couric Leadership Forum will honor Sonja Hoel Perkins with the Women’s Leadership Award at its 2022 Annual Emily Couric Leadership event. The award acknowledges an exceptional woman who exemplifies leadership in her profession and her community. During the event, the Forum will also recognize eleven area high school women for leadership excellence with college scholarships.

Sonja Hoel Perkins has been investing “in people and companies that matter” for over 30 years. Considered one of the best performing and most senior technology-focused venture capitalists, she has invested in startups that have achieved multibillion-dollar valuations. Inspired to create successful venture capital strategies that support women entrepreneurs and benefit women and girls, Perkins founded Broadway Angels, a network of top venture capitalists and executives who all happen to be women.

Many of the philanthropic initiatives Perkins underwrites seek to empower women. Perkins is the founder of Project Glimmer, a national non-profit organization that inspires every girl to envision and realize her empowered future. The Sonja Hoel Perkins Scholarship was established at the University of Virginia in 2005 to support African American women who would not otherwise attend college.

Perkins grew up in Charlottesville, attending Albemarle High School and the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia. Her father, Lester Hoel, was the Chairman of the Civil Engineering Department and her mother worked for Health Services. After Harvard Business School, she found her way to Silicon Valley. Sonja was the only woman venture capitalist at Menlo Ventures. She funded game-changing companies from McAfee, Hotmail, F5 Networks, Acme Packet, Uber, The RealReal and many more. At the age of 29, she became the youngest General Partner in the firm's history. 50% of her founders are women.

After two decades at Menlo Ventures, Perkins established The Perkins Fund, concentrating on investing in high technology companies, and she became part of the C200, Women Moving Millions and The Maverick Collective. She is one of four women profiled in Julian Guthrie’s book *Alpha Girls: The Women Upstarts Who Took on Silicon Valley’s Male Culture and Made the Deals of a Lifetime.*

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Meredith Gunter, chair of the Forum board said, “The Emily Couric Leadership Forum is passionate about educating high potential young women. Our goal is to inspire emerging leaders by connecting them to role models like Sonja Perkins. Her professional achievements and dedication to improving opportunity for young women exemplifies the leadership that the Forum celebrates.”

About Emily Couric Leadership Forum

The Forum established a scholarship fund at the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation to honor the legacy of the late Virginia State Senator Emily Couric. Through the scholarship and Women’s Leadership Award, the Forum encourages all women to adopt an active role in government, public issues, and policy debates affecting their communities, and to inspire young women to pursue activities which will enable them to become effective leaders. For more information visit <https://www.emilycouricleadershipforum.org>

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