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• Please click on link to view and download photo of France Desharnais:
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France Desharnais joins Avison Young's Board of Directors

***Former EY business development executive appointed
as an independent director of commercial real estate services firm***

Toronto, Canada – Mark E. Rose, Chair and CEO of **Avison Young**, the world's fastest-growing commercial real estate services firm, announced today that **France Desharnais** has been appointed to its board of directors.

Effective immediately, Desharnais becomes the board's second independent director. Her appointment expands the board to nine members. She will also be a member of the audit committee of the board.

Most recently a business development executive with EY, Desharnais has led companies through significant growth, enhanced operating efficiency and increased profitability on a large scale during more than three decades of management, finance, business-turnaround, accounting and business development experience. She has managed large, complex corporate clients and successfully driven significant client proposals and transformations in Canada and internationally. During her 10 years as a financial institution executive in the banking, insurance and wealth-management spheres, she thrived at solving problems and sparking transformations through creative solutions.

As a board member and senior corporate executive, she has applied her innovative approach to diverse sectors, including real estate, aerospace, retail and consumer products, entertainment, transportation and manufacturing in both Canada and France.

"We are thrilled to have France join Avison Young's board of directors," comments Rose. "France has a well-established track record of exceeding expectations wherever she has served. She is pragmatic and creative, and excels at simplifying complex situations to facilitate effective decision-making, strategy development and the successful execution of long-term business goals. She was innovating before the word became fashionable."

Rose continues: "Not only is France an experienced leader who is passionate about helping companies achieve their growth and profitability agendas, she thrives on collaboration, partnerships and making everyone in the organization accountable to clients through the proper

mobilization of resources. She knows how to ask the right questions to drive results and manage risks. We look forward to benefiting from her diverse experience and strategic leadership.”

At EY, Desharnais was responsible for a large account portfolio valued in excess of \$25 million. During her tenure at EY from 2002 to 2018, she spent two years as the business development leader for the France, Maghred and Luxembourg region, responsible for 20 business development executives and entrusted with a mandate to transform the team, operating model, methodology and tools to reach growth targets. In addition to working for EY, she has had business development leadership experience with Siebel Systems Canada and CGI. As a regional manager at Desjardins Group, she was mainly responsible for growth and profitability improvement of a group of credit unions with \$2 billion to \$4 billion of assets under management.

“We welcome France to Avison Young’s board of directors. She is a great addition,” notes Avison Young board member and Chief Legal Officer **Bob Slaughter**. “She will bring another outside perspective to the board’s deliberations. France’s experience as an executive at companies in the services sector and managing relationships with complex, strategic clients, as well as her international experience, will enable her to make important contributions to our board’s discussions as Avison Young continues to execute its growth strategy.”

Desharnais currently serves as an independent board and audit committee member with Quebec’s television and broadcasting society (Société de télédiffusion du Québec). She has also held board and committee member positions with the Quebec MBA Association (2016 - 2018); the Canadian Cancer Society, both provincially and nationally (2007-2013); and Desjardins Credit Union (1993-1994). She is informed on recent trends and challenges in corporate governance, risk management and new technology, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, robotics and cybersecurity.

“I am privileged to join the board of Avison Young as an independent director,” says Desharnais, who is based in Montreal, Canada. “The firm’s rapid expansion and success over the past 10 years are a testament to Avison Young’s strong values, culture and unique approach to serving clients. Avison Young’s strong leadership team and collaborative working environment have been recognized by numerous awards and accolades over the years, and I believe in the company’s client-centric approach to building trusted, long-term relationships with clients and serving them wherever they choose to operate on the globe. I am eager to contribute to the continued success and growth of Avison Young. In this quickly changing environment, our clients, more than ever, need guidance to ensure that their workplace facilities have a positive impact on people’s lives.”

Desharnais is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA-CA) and certified corporate director (Administrateur de sociétés certifié – ASC). She holds a Master of Business Administration degree in finance from HEC Montreal business school and a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting from Université de Sherbrooke.

With the addition of Desharnais, the board now consists of **Mark Rose** (Chair and CEO), **Mathieu Desforges**, **France Desharnais**, **Carol Johnson**, **Arthur Mirante**, **Benoit Raillard**, **Bob Slaughter**, **Earl Webb** and **Cory Wosnack**.

Avison Young is the world’s fastest-growing commercial real estate services firm. Headquartered in Toronto, Canada, Avison Young is a collaborative, global firm owned and operated by its Principals. Founded in 1978, with legacies dating back more than 200 years, the company comprises approximately 5,000 real estate professionals in 120 offices in 20 countries. The firm’s

experts provide value-added, client-centric investment sales, leasing, advisory, management and financing services to clients across the office, retail, industrial, multi-family and hospitality sectors.

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