



## **Mary Ghrist James**

### **Director**

Mary grew up in the Midwest and quickly acquired a love of nature and the outdoors. As a young girl, she spent time with her family hiking the Colorado Rockies and later as a teenager canoeing the lakes of Western Ontario, Canada.

Upon graduating from Iowa State University with a B.S. in Education, Special Needs Child Endorsement, Mary lived on both U.S. coasts working primarily in real estate (land title & mortgage banking). Leaving real estate for a job with Tiffany & Co. in its diamond office in New York City, Mary explored the natural settings of the marine and the Eastern Woodlands regions.

Eventually, Mary returned to Des Moines, IA for marriage and children. With two daughters of her own and five stepchildren, she spent her time as a full-time mother, as an elementary school and community volunteer and as the wife of a multi-company business owner.

Conservation and habitat restoration have always been a focal part of Mary's interests and support. Gardening, prairie restoration and now desert preservation remain front and center in her life.

After moving to Arizona 5 years ago, Mary found Desert Foothills Land Trust to be one of her main passions. Along with this, Mary works at a nursery and continues to learn about the flora of the desert region. Additionally, Mary is a part of a women's educational organization, P.E.O., and is a member of the Arizona Pilots Association. She also volunteers with the Cave Creek Museum & Cactus Shadows High School PTO.