



## **DR. SONAT BIRNECKER**

President

After receiving an MSt from Oxford and a PhD from the University of London, Sonat Birnecker Hart spent over a decade teaching and lecturing in both the United States and Germany. In 2008, she gave up tenure in hopes of a different quality of life - one that would afford an opportunity for her to work with her husband, give up commuting, and return to the city she loved: Chicago. To achieve this goal, she and her husband, Master Distiller Robert Birnecker, founded one of the first urban craft distilleries in the US, KOVAL Distillery, where she has spearheaded much of the product development, distribution and marketing. She is also the co-founder of Kothe Distilling Technologies, a distillery startup consulting firm, also serving as a representative for many distillery equipment companies, including Germany's leading pot still manufacturer, Kothe Destillationstechnik. She and her husband have taught and consulted for over 1000 people (in the last few years alone), mostly through the workshops they host for distilling hopefuls at their distillery in Chicago. KOVAL's spirits have won gold medals on both sides of the Atlantic and their distribution now reaches about 25 states, as well as Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Japan, Canada and Australia.