

DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE

RELENTLESS EXCELLENCE

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Media Contacts:

Leigh Hopkins | Director of Marketing & Public Relations
(214) 871-2390 | l.hopkins@dbdt.com

Victoria Ribeiro | Community & Digital Strategy Manager
(214) 871-1762 | v.ribeiro@dbdt.com



Photos by Sylvia Elzafon

DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE FIFTH ANNUAL "THE BIG DANCE"

FINDS CHART TOPPING SUCCESS WITH THE MOTOWN SOUND

OVER \$100,000 RAISED TO BENEFIT THE DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY

Dallas, TX – **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's (DBDT)** annual fundraiser, **The BIG Dance**, took place June 1st at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. The Motown-themed event, supported by Honorary Chair **Erykah Badu** and co-chaired by **Tiffany D. Hunter (Tiffany Dale Agency, LLC)** and **Ebonie Hughey Jackson (Bank of**

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America), was not only a resounding success but also brought together the Dallas community for a night of dance and celebration.

“We are overwhelmed with gratitude for the incredible support we received at this year’s BIG Dance,” said **Zenetta Drew, Executive Director of Dallas Black Dance Theatre**. “Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and attendees, we raised critical funds that will directly impact the lives of our academy students.



Jordan Kahn's Manhattan Orchestra
Photo by Sylvia Elzafon

The BIG Dance featured live performances throughout the evening by **Jordan Kahn's Manhattan Orchestra**, transporting guests back to the golden age of Motown with classic soul tunes and line dance lessons from the era that concluded with a party-wide Soul Train line! The event also honored the nine **Presidential Scholars** who had previously attended the **Dallas Black Dance Academy (DBDA)**.

An honor reserved for the nation's most distinguished graduating seniors, the **Commission on Presidential Scholars** only selects **20 U.S. Presidential Scholars in the Arts** each year. DBDT's nine Presidential Scholars embody the mission and spirit of the Academy, with **their first Presidential Scholar being recognized in 1980** within one of the first cohorts of Presidential Scholars of the Arts, which the program only extended to include in 1979.

The evening's emcee, **Three-Time Emmy Award-winning NBC 5 news anchor Kristi Nelson** was joined on stage by the founder of both Dallas Black Dance Theatre and Dallas Black Dance Academy, **Ann M. Williams**, to present the awards to the Presidential Scholars and their representatives.

The honored Presidential Scholars included **Milton T. Tatum** (1980 Presidential Scholar), **Dereque Whiter**s (1981 Presidential Scholar), **Ramona Jackson** (1983 Presidential Scholar), **Carla Wattley** (1985 Presidential Scholar), **David Wilson** (1987 Presidential Scholar), **Courtney Blackwell** (1998 Presidential Scholar), **Vernon Gooden** (2001 Presidential Scholar), **My'Kal Stromile** (2014 Presidential Scholar) and **Jared Brown** (2016 Presidential Scholar).



From left: Ebonie Hughey Jackson, Kristi Nelson and Tiffaney D. Hunter
Photo by Sylvia Elzafon



Dallas Black Dance Academy Presidential Scholars with Ann M. Williams (center)
Photo by Sylvia Elzafon

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“Bank of America’s support of this energizing, inspiring event delivers on two of our core commitments; to uplift the arts in our community, and to advance initiatives that generate economic opportunity for all. Congratulations to the Dallas Black Dance Academy on a successful evening, and to our own Ebonie Hughey Jackson for your leadership in championing this initiative,” said **Jennifer Chandler, president, Bank of America Dallas.**



Bank of America representatives
Photo by Sylvia Elzafon

The proceeds from The BIG Dance will directly support Dallas Black Dance Academy’s mission of providing high quality dance education to students throughout the DFW Metroplex. Every year the funds raised allow for a **40% reduction in tuition fees** for students enrolled in DBDA training programs, in addition to providing support to **free in-school outreach programs for more than 3,000 K-12 students across the DFW Metroplex.**

Since 2012, 100% of Academy seniors have graduated high school and been accepted to college, with many receiving scholarships to top dance programs like

Juilliard. Additionally, DBDA graduates have been awarded talent scholarships to outstanding universities and colleges, with many have been chosen to perform in professional ballet, modern dance, and jazz companies throughout the United States and Europe, while many others are furthering dance education and teaching across the United States.

Donations for Dallas Black Dance Academy’s programs are still being accepted. For more information, visit dallasbigdance.com.

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Bank of America, Locke Lorde and Honey Bee Photo Booth

ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE

Founded in 1976 by **Ann Williams**, and currently under the direction of Melissa M. Young, **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's** mission is to create and produce contemporary modern dance at the highest level of artistic excellence through performances and educational programs that bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. As the largest and oldest professional dance company in Dallas, DBDT is the fourth-largest Black dance company in the nation, the seventh-largest contemporary modern dance company, and ranked 36th among the nation's leading ballet companies. Located in the thriving downtown Dallas Arts District, DBDT has performed worldwide for over 4.6 million arts patrons and 2.8 million students in 33 states and 16 countries on five continents. The performances include two Olympics (1996 & 2012), the nation's most prestigious venues (**Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Broadway, Jacob's Pillow**), and for such luminaries as **Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II** and **South African President Nelson Mandela**. Since the pandemic began in 2020, DBDT performances have also been viewed virtually in 43 countries. The Company has been recognized by the **National Endowment for the Arts** as an American Masterpiece Touring Artist (2008) and received the **Texas Medal of the Arts Award** for Arts Education (2017).

For more details about **Dallas Black Dance Theatre**, visit www.dbdt.com.

ABOUT DALLAS BLACK DANCE ACADEMY

The official school of Dallas Black Dance Theatre celebrates 50 years of delivering dance instruction to a community of diverse backgrounds. It was founded by **Ann Williams**. The academy trained the **first student in the nation to receive the Presidential Scholar Award** in Dance in 1980. Students participate weekly in 36 dance classes, including ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African on-site at DBDT's studios. Classes are held at Dallas Black Dance Theatre's studios and are open to students ages four to adult. The academy has three performing ensembles: **Allegro Performing Ensemble**, **Dallas Black Dance Theatre's premier academy ensemble**, **Senior Performing Ensemble**, and **Junior Performing Ensemble**.

For details on Dallas Black Dance Academy, visit www.dbdt.com/academy.