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Dallas Black Dance Theatre Names New Artistic Director
Renowned Former Ailey Dancer Joins Prestigious Company

[August 21, 2014] –DALLAS – **April Berry**, whose resume' reads like the Who's Who of the modern dance world has been named to succeed founder Ann Williams as the Artistic Director of Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT).

Master teacher, dance educator, choreographer and internationally recognized dancer, Berry is a native of New York. She began her professional training at the **National Academy of Ballet and Theatre Arts** in New York City and continued her training on scholarships at the **Dance Theatre of Harlem** and the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater**.

As a former principal dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Judith Jamison taught her the role of the umbrella woman in the "Wading in the Water" segment of Mr. Ailey's signature "Revelations." She has danced with other ballet companies in the United States, Italy and Switzerland. Her career as a dancer allowed her to work directly with renowned choreographers and artists including **Alvin Ailey, Katherine Dunham, Talley Beatty, Arthur Mitchell, Judith Jamison, Carmen DeLavallade, Donald McKayle, Bill T. Jones** and more.

As a choreographer, Ms. Berry's accomplishments include original choreography for **Debbie Allen's** *The Chocolate Nutcracker*, and **Richard Adler's** Tony – award winning musical *Kwamina*.

Prior to accepting the position with DBDT, Ms. Berry served as adjunct dance faculty at **the University of North Carolina-Charlotte** with teaching areas that include modern dance and improvisation. She was a Teaching Artist in the **Charlotte Arts and Science Council's Education Program** and founded the **Arts 'n Community**, dedicated to providing specialized services to small and emerging arts organizations in the United States.

She also previously served as Teaching Artist for **Project L.I.F.T./Arts and Science Council STEAM Camps**, a Modern Dance Instructor for the **American Dance Festival School (ADF)** and freelance choreographer. She served as the Director of Education at North Carolina Dance Theatre in Charlotte and Director of Education and Community Programs at **BalletMet Columbus**. She also has taught for **The Ohio State University**, and the **Charlotte Ballet**. She was artist in residence at **Denison University**.

Ms. Berry is a certified master instructor in **Dunham Technique**, a codified modern dance technique created by American dance pioneer, **Katherine Dunham**. She was personally certified by Miss Dunham and has the special distinction of having worked directly with Dunham.

"I am thrilled to become a part of the Dallas Black Dance Theatre family as Artistic Director and to contribute to the next phase of the company's journey," said Ms. Berry.

“It is a privilege to follow in the footsteps of Ann Williams, a great leader, whose vision has elevated Dallas Black Dance Theatre to prominent national status. I will honor the company’s rich history and legacy and maintain the organization’s standard of excellence as we move together toward a strong and exciting future.”

Ann Williams, who founded DBDT in 1976, will remain actively involved with the organization for the next several months to assist with the transition of the new director. Afterwards, Ms. Williams says that she will remain supportive and continue to seek funding opportunities for the organization as well as attending programs, master classes and workshops. “Next year, I am looking forward to completely stepping back and enjoying DBDT from afar,” said Williams.

Ms. Berry will begin working with the company full time on September 2, 2014.

To schedule interviews with April Berry or Ann Williams, please contact Sonya Spencer, Sr. Director of Marketing and Public Relations at s.spencer@dbdt.com or by phone at 214.871.2376.

About Dallas Black Dance Theatre

Founded in 1976 by Ann Williams, the mission of Dallas Black Dance Theatre is to create and produce contemporary modern dance at its highest level of artistic excellence through performances and educational programs that bridge cultures and reach diverse communities. With an ever-expanding national and global audience, the company employs a diverse, multi-ethnic troupe of dancers performing for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Located at the eastern end of the thriving downtown Dallas Arts District, Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) is a nationally recognized professional modern dance company that engages the cross-cultural community through contemporary modern dance presented from the African-American experience. Over the course of its history, DBDT has performed worldwide for 3.5 million arts patrons and 2.5 million students, grades K-12, and annually serves more than 95,000 persons in Dallas and the North Texas area, including more than 20,000 youth.

*Dallas Black Dance Theatre’s professional company, **DBDT**, consists of 12 full-time professional dancers performing a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, African and spiritual works by nationally and internationally known choreographers. DBDT’s second performing company, **DBDT II**, consists of 8 semi-professional artists from around the nation to support DBDT’s growing local and regional educational outreach.*

***Dallas Black Dance Academy- the official school of Dallas Black Dance**, celebrates 41 years of providing dance instruction to the community. Over 475 students participate weekly in over 50 dance classes in the disciplines of ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African. Classes are offered at the DBDT studios located at 2700 Flora Street in the Dallas Arts District as well as in local schools and community centers.*

Sponsors for the 38th Season of Dance (2014-2015)

Dallas Black Dance Theatre appreciates the support provided by the following generous community, corporate and philanthropic organizations for its 38th Season of Dance: Season Sponsors – Downtown Business News, Texas Instruments, Office of Cultural Affairs-City of Dallas. Artistic and Choreography sponsored by: NorthPark Center, Jean Baptiste “Tad” Adoue III Fund of The Dallas Foundation, and the Bowdon Family Foundation. Additional season support provided by: National Endowment for the Arts -ArtWorks, American Airlines, Texas Commission on the Arts, AT&T Performing Arts Center, Lexus, Yellow Cab, Southside on Lamar, Black Business Directory, Elite News, DallasBlack.com, Dallas Examiner, Metroplex Daily, Busca Apps, CBS Channel 11, WFAA Channel 8, Dallas Weekly, Post Tribune, WRR and Radio One. DBDT gratefully acknowledges legacy sponsor: Harold Simmons Foundation.

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