

# DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE



*RELENTLESS EXCELLENCE*

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## **Dallas Black Dance Theatre Founder's Luncheon During the 40th Anniversary Season**

Dallas, TX - **Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT)** celebrates the 40th anniversary season of the dance company during its annual Founder's Luncheon Wednesday January 18, 2017, at noon in the Hilton Anatole Hotel, 2201 N. Stemmons Freeway, Dallas, TX 75207.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre founder **Ann Williams** steered DBDT to become the oldest dance company in Dallas and the 10th largest minority arts organization in the nation. **Honorary Chairs Ambassador Ron Kirk and Matrice Ellis-Kirk** along with **Luncheon General Chairs State Senator Royce and Carol West** are helping Ms. Williams and DBDT to celebrate this milestone.

The luncheon honors two outstanding North Texans who have made long-term commitments to the arts in Dallas. The 2017 honorees are **Gilbert Gerst and Verna Brown Mitchell**. Gerst is Senior Vice President/Manager, Community Development Banking at Bank of Texas and currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Dallas Black Dance Theatre. Within his 24 years as a board member, he has served 15 years in an executive capacity. Verna Brown Mitchell is a retired principal and longtime community volunteer. She has volunteered with Dallas Black Dance Theatre on the Founder's luncheon committee for more than two decades. "Gilbert and Verna have been exceptional arts champions to Dallas Black Dance Theatre in particular and arts education in the city overall," said Ann Williams. The Mistress of Ceremony for the luncheon is **Bernice J. Washington**, CEO of BJW Consulting Group, LLC and CEO/Owner of Urgent Plus Care, LLC.

The Founder's luncheon is the major community fundraiser for DBDT. Event proceeds benefit DBDT's community outreach and education programs in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, including dance classes, workshops, and lecture/demonstrations to over 20,000 students (grades K12) from Dallas ISD and other metroplex private and home schools.

The Founder's Luncheon is presented by **JPMorgan Chase & Co.** Co-sponsors include Bank of Texas, Deloitte LLP, Hilton Anatole Dallas, Lock Lord LLP and Charley and Rozene Pride Enterprises.

A steering committee is working to make the Founder's Luncheon a success: Ms. Jeanette Allen, Ms. Susie Bell, Pastor Bryan Carter, Mrs. Stephanie Carter, Mrs. Joleen Chambers, Dr. Dralves Edwards, Dr. Ellen S. Cooper-Edwards, Dr. Evelyn Green Daniels, Mrs. Veronica Frazier, Ms. Billie Hawkins, Ms. Kimberly McCormick Jones, Ms. Gloria Lockett, Mrs. Sandra D. Malone, Rev. Claude O. Maples, Mrs. Patricia B. Maples, Ms. Verna Brown Mitchell, Ms. Heidi Murray, Mrs. Herdercine Nash, Mr. Joe Nash, Mrs. Hattie Marie Newhouse, Ms. Kimberly Runnels, Mr. Quintin Salmond, Mrs. Karen Factory-Salmond, Mrs. Deloris R. Washington, Mrs. Paula Watkins, Mrs. Carol West, and Ms. Ann Williams.

For more information about purchasing tickets or a table at the Founder's Luncheon, contact DBDT's Development Office at 214-871-2376 or email [development@dbdt.com](mailto:development@dbdt.com).

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### **About Dallas Black Dance Theatre**

Founded in 1976 by Ann Williams, Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) is the oldest continuously operating professional dance company in Dallas. It has become the largest minority arts organization in Dallas and the 10th largest in the nation. 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 in a historic facility at the eastern end of the thriving downtown Dallas Arts District, Dallas Black Dance Theatre is a nationally and internationally recognized professional modern dance company. DBDT engages the cross-cultural community through contemporary modern dance presented from the African American experience. Dallas Black Dance Theatre is a resident company member of the AT&T Performing Arts Center - Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre located in Dallas's Art District.

During its 40-year history, Dallas Black Dance Theatre has performed on five continents, in 15 countries and 31 states, including two Olympic Cultural events. Over the years, more than 4 million arts patrons and 2.6 million students, grades K-12, have experienced the dance company's performances and educational outreach programs. DBDT serves more than 100,000 people annually, including more than 20,000 youth in grades K-12 in Dallas-Fort Worth area schools.

DBDT offers community outreach services through workshops, lecture/demonstrations, master-classes, residences, mini-performances and student matinees that are designed level-specific for elementary, middle, high school and university students. Another 40,000 youth and adults are reached through local, national and international festivals, tours, special performances at universities, social service agencies, professional and corporate organizations, civic events and community venues.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre is comprised of five performing companies and its training Academy. 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 national and international choreographers. DBDT: Encore! (formerly DBDT II) features eight artists of rising excellence from across the nation that support DBDT's growing local and regional educational outreach.

**Dallas Black Dance Academy**, the official school of Dallas Black Dance Theatre, celebrates 43 years of delivering dance instruction to a community of diverse backgrounds. Over 500 students participate weekly in 50 dance classes of ballet, jazz, tap, modern, and African at DBDT studios for ages four to adult. The academy has three performing ensembles: Allegro, DBDT's premier academy ensemble, Senior Performing Ensemble, and Junior Performing Ensemble.

For more details visit [www.DBDT.com](http://www.DBDT.com) and [www.dbdt.com/academy](http://www.dbdt.com/academy).



Some members of the Dallas Black Dance Theatre Founder's Luncheon committee during November 2016 meeting..  
Seated left to right: Susie Bell, Carol West, Ann Williams, Verna Brown Mitchell and Sandra D. Malone.  
Standing left to right: Winnie Buford, Kimberly Runnels, Deloris R. Washington, Quintin Salmond, Dr. Ellen S. Cooper-Edwards, Karen Factory-Salmond, Evelyn Green Daniels, Gloria Lockett and Veronia Frazier.



(l-r) Royce and Carol West, and Joleen and Jim Chambers.

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