

Houston Ballet Foundation
Meeting of the Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Monday, September 23, 2024

Call to order: The Houston Ballet Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in the Margaret Alkek Williams Dance Lab on Monday, September 23rd, 2024, in Houston, Texas. Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Mrs. Kristy J. Bradshaw, Mr. James Cowan, Ms. Michelle Iversen Jeffery, Mr. Daniel M. McClure, Mrs. Cabrina Owsley, Mr. Kent A. Schaffer, Stephanie Tsuru, Mrs. Christine M. Underwood, Ms. Leslie Alston, Mr. Nicholas Baran, Mrs. Diane Bazelides, Ms. Lindsey Brown, Mrs. Lenni Burke, Dawn Campbell, Mr. Michael Collins, Mrs. Margaret Vaughan Cox, Mrs. Molly Crownover, Ms. Sasha Davis, Mrs. Martha Finger, Mrs. Jo Furr, Mrs. Marianne Geagea, Mrs. Ann Graham, Mrs. Twana Griffith-Faykus, Mrs. Jayne S. Johnston, Mr. James M. Jordan, Mr. Edward Koehler, Ms. Amy LeBlanc, Chad Libertus, Ms. Judy Liu, Mr. Mark Loveland, Mrs. Jean E. May, Mrs. Kris McGee, Mrs. Andrea Medina, Ms. Beth Muecke, Mrs. Patti Murphy, Mrs. Teal Tigner Reamer, Ms. Melissa Reihle, Mr. Aaditya Satija, Mrs. James Shaffer, Dannika E. Simpson, Mrs. Ileana Treviño, Mrs. Paula Whitten-Doolin

STAFF PRESENT: Kelli Gilson, Julie Kent, Rachel Koenig, Paige Kutschall, Angie Lane, Jim Nelson, Jennifer Sommers, Stanton Welch AM

GUESTS PRESENT: James Wilson, Sam Rodriguez, Tyler Donatelli, Jack Wolff

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru welcomed everyone and invited everyone to recognize this season's new trustees. With a quorum present, the minutes from the May 20th meeting were approved.

SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru congratulated Onstage Dinner chairs and honorees on a record-breaking event. She then reviewed upcoming special events for the season including the Nutcracker Market, Ballet Ball, and Raising the Barre. Lastly, she shared her excitement for the Spring Nutcracker Market, returning in April 2026.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru then invited Chad Libertus to provide information about the Board's IDEA Committee.

Chad invited Trustees to join the IDEA committee, noting that its purpose is to ensure that leadership—specifically Jim, Julie, and Stanton—remains accountable for upholding Houston Ballet's commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access throughout the organization. In addition, he

noted the vital role that trustees play in recruiting and cultivating a diverse set of trustees to serve Houston Ballet.

Stephanie thanked Chad, echoing the importance of the Ballet's commitment to IDEA and complementing the ways it has been woven into the current strategic plan.

She then invited Mr. Jim Nelson to give the Executive Director's report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Jim Nelson began his report by thanking this season's production and dancer underwriters. He welcomed Trustees to upcoming events, including Raymonda: Studio to Stage presentations, Dance Talks, and the patron tour to Japan.

Following this, Mr. Nelson reviewed the Ballet's strategic priority of building a sustainable financial model with a special focus on growing the endowment to \$200 million by 2035.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked Jim for his report and invited Ms. Kelli Gilson to begin the Artistic Director's report.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' REPORT

Ms. Kelli Gilson opened the report detailing the Lauren Anderson Dance Residency at UCROSS. She then invited Mr. Jack Wolff, a current Houston Ballet Company dancer and inaugural recipient of the residency, to share his experience this past summer. Mr. Wolff shared how his time at UCROSS was life-changing and thanked Deborah and Ed Koehler, Lauren Anderson, Julie Kent, and Stanton Welch for making it possible. Ms. Gilson echoed her thanks and invited Ms. Kent and Mr. Welch to continue the report.

Mrs. Julie Kent began by reviewing the upcoming repertory for the season. She also shared about the Company's recent tour to the Chautauqua Institution. Mr. Welch then expanded on the Company's upcoming tour to New Orleans.

Mr. Welch then invited Mrs. Jennifer Sommer to the stage. Mrs. Sommers shared about Houston Ballet's upcoming Studio Series performances and invited HBA students to perform a piece from the upcoming program.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked the students for their performance and invited everyone to the reception following the meeting. She then welcomed any old business, and with none, she invited Mr. Nelson up to share new business. Mr. Nelson announced his retirement in 2026 and thanked everyone for their support over the last 40 years of his career.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.