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ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

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JOAN H. WEILL TO RETIRE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF ALVIN AILEY DANCE FOUNDATION AFTER TWO DECADES OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

One-Night-Only Season Opening Gala Benefit on December 3rd to Honor and Celebrate Beloved Chair for Unparalleled Contributions to the Ailey Organization

NEW YORK, NY — October 2, 2014 — [Joan H. Weill](#), Chairman of Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc., informed the Board of Trustees and announced today that she intends to retire at the end of this year. Mrs. Weill joined the Ailey Board in 1994, was named Chairman in 2000 and is widely acknowledged as a driving force in the growth of the entire Ailey organization over the past two decades. The company's purpose-built permanent home at the corner of 55th Street and Ninth Avenue, created through her leadership, is named The Joan Weill Center for Dance in her honor.

To recognize Mrs. Weill's years of service to Ailey and the entire cultural community, she has been named honoree and will be celebrated at the Company's December 3rd Opening Night Gala Benefit. Sanford I. Weill and Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning actor Jeffrey Wright will serve as Honorary Chairs for the benefit performance at New York City Center — where Ailey is Principal Dance Company— and party at the New York Hilton Midtown Grand Ballroom, which raises funds to support the creation of new works and Ailey's extensive educational programs.

"It is only fitting that we celebrate Joan, our long-time and beloved Board Chair, at an unforgettable [Opening Night Gala](#) Benefit. Her leadership turned this celebratory evening into one of the city's most high-profile events each December. I have worked alongside Joan for the past two decades, seeing first-hand how she has been an inspiring leader," Executive Director of Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc. [Bennett Rink](#) stated. "With an inimitable combination of warm wisdom, grace, and hands-on commitment, she has strengthened and improved every single aspect of what we do. All of us look forward to thanking her wholeheartedly on December 3 for her magnificent legacy, which I am sure will only continue to grow."

[Robert Battle](#), Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, stated, "Joan Weill was a bigger-than-life figure to me before I joined Ailey, because I knew what she had done for this company, and I was awed by it. Then came the morning when I got a call to drop by her office, and she told me I had been chosen to become the Artistic Director. At that moment, I learned personally about the Joan Weill who is not only awe-inspiring, and very efficient, but also endlessly kind, thoughtful, and supportive. Since that morning, like everyone else at Ailey, I have known what a gift it is to be empowered by Joan. We hope our Gala will express even a tenth of the gratitude we feel for her."

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Joan Weill said, “The institutions you support are like your children. You have to know when to step back and let them be independent of you. For twenty years now the Ailey organization, or the Ailey family as we call it, has been a huge part of my life. It always will be. But this is a good time for fresh leadership. I look forward to seeing Ailey continue to do great things. I will still be the one applauding loudest.”

Highlights of the December 3 Gala honoring Joan Weill, the inaugural performance in Ailey’s five-week holiday season at New York City Center, include: the exciting company premiere of Hofesh Schecter’s critically-acclaimed ***Uprising*** and Artistic Director Robert Battle’s tender duet ***Unfold***, danced to Gustave Charpentier’s exquisite aria (“Louise, Act III, Depuis Le Jour”) sung live by opera superstar soprano Angela Gheorghiu (who appears by kind permission of the Metropolitan Opera). Alvin Ailey’s classic American masterpiece ***Revelations*** will provide the uplifting finale with live musicians and singers featuring the legendary Ella Mitchell.

Joan Weill’s Legacy

In the 14 years since Joan Weill first began her tenure as Chairman of the Board, the Ailey organization has experienced extraordinary growth and deepened its indelible impact on the field of dance. Most notable among her many accomplishments as Chairman is Mrs. Weill’s central role in creating a permanent home for the Ailey organization – New York’s largest facility dedicated to dance. The opening of The Joan Weill Center for Dance in 2005 secured Ailey as a New York cultural treasure for future generations. In addition to launching a new era for the organization, the Center introduced The Ailey Extension – a program of dance and fitness classes for the general public that extends Alvin Ailey’s life-long commitment of bringing dance to everyone.

Joan and husband Sanford Weill were lead supporters of *The Next Step: The Campaign to Build Ailey’s Endowment*, which increased the organization’s endowment to \$50 million in 2008 during an unparalleled 50th anniversary celebration with over a year of special performances, projects and events. During that time, Ailey was recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital “American Cultural Ambassador to the World.” The Weills established The Joan & Sandy Weill Global Ambassador Fund, which helps extend Ailey’s national and international reach; they traveled with the Company around the globe; and facilitated tours to Shanghai, Beijing, and St. Petersburg. Under Joan Weill’s leadership, Ailey’s New York presence also increased: she helped spearhead a 10-year agreement with New York City Center, including an annual winter season of performances and support for the creation of new work; and she was instrumental in establishing an annual spring season at Lincoln Center’s David H. Koch Theater.

Mrs. Weill has demonstrated an equal commitment to both the Company’s artistry as well as Ailey’s Arts-In-Education programs, which reach 100,000 young people annually through student performances, dance classes, *Revelations*-inspired curriculum-based residencies in the public schools and AileyCamp, a unique full-scholarship day camp for underserved youth in nine cities. Her passion for giving opportunities to young people extends to providing opportunities for developing the next generation of performing artists, increasing the scholarships and housing support for students at The Ailey School.

In 2002, Mrs. Weill received the National Medal of Arts on behalf of the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, alongside Judith Jamison, Artistic Director at the time. The Foundation was the first dance organization in history to be given this prestigious award, as well as the first time ever that an arts organization and its artistic director have been recognized independently for this honor.

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Among her other philanthropic commitments, Joan Weill is Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall, which promotes music education in classrooms around the world. Her dedication to women's health issues led to her appointment as Co-Chair of the New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center's Women's Health Symposium. Long an advocate for the elderly, Mrs. Weill is also an Honorary Board Member and President Emeritus of Citymeals-On-Wheels. She is a Trustee Emerita of Paul Smith's College of the Adirondacks, where during her term as Chair she spearheaded the College's transition from a 2-year to 4-year institution.

Mrs. Weill's personal commitment to public service also extends to many of the activities in which her husband is involved, in addition to Carnegie Hall, including the National Academy Foundation (NAF), Weill Cornell Medical College and the New York Presbyterian Hospital, where she serves on the Executive Committee of their Lying-In Hospital.

Joan H. Weill and her husband Sanford I Weill were recipients of the 2009 Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy Award in recognition of their philanthropic efforts.

Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation expects to announce a new Chairman prior to the end of [Ailey's New York City Center season](#) that runs from December 3, 2014 to January 4, 2015. For further information about Ailey's performances, programs and classes, visit www.alvinailey.org.

ABOUT ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATER

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, recognized by U.S. Congressional resolution as a vital American "Cultural Ambassador to the World," grew from a now-fabled March 1958 performance in New York that changed forever the perception of American dance. Founded by Alvin Ailey, and guided by Judith Jamison beginning in 1989, the Company is now led by Robert Battle, whom Judith Jamison chose to succeed her on July 1, 2011. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater has performed for an estimated 23 million people in 71 countries on 6 continents, promoting the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience and the preservation and enrichment of the American modern dance tradition. In addition to being the Principal Dance Company of New York City Center, where its performances have become a year-end tradition, the Ailey company performs annually at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County in Miami, The Fox Theatre in Atlanta, Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley, CA and at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark where it is the Principal Resident Affiliate, and appears frequently in other major theaters throughout the United States and the world during extensive yearly tours. The Ailey organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world; Ailey Arts in Education & Community Programs, which brings dance into the classrooms, communities and lives of people of all ages; and The Ailey Extension (2005), a program offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of Ailey's permanent home—the largest building dedicated to dance in New York City, the dance capital of the world —named The Joan Weill Center for Dance, at 55th Street at 9th Avenue in New York City. For more information, visit www.alvinailey.org.

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