IABD CELEBRATES ARTISTS, LEADERS, PHILANTHROPISTS AND SCHOLARS, AT ITS 2019 CONFERENCE AND FESTIVAL GALA AWARDS DINNER

31st Annual International Conference and Festival of Blacks in Dance Honoring Richard Lapedes, Maureen A. Lynch, Halifu Osumare, Sheri “Sparkle” Williams, and Reginald Van Lee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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(October 18, 2018) Dayton, OH - In marking 28 years of serving the Black Dance field, the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD) will host its 31st Annual International Conference and Festival in Dayton, OH from January 22 – 27, 2019, in partnership with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company. IABD announces the organization’s Gala Awards Dinners in Dayton, OH, to be held on Saturday, January 26, 2019, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 33 E 5th St., Dayton, OH 45402, honoring Richard Lapedes, Reginald Van Lee, Halifu Osumare, and Sheri “Sparkle” Williams.

In keeping with the conference and festival theme, Etched In Stone: Resilient Through Time, the evening will begin with an inspiring recap of the organization from its past 30 years. The Conference and Festival culminate with this exciting Gala and Dinner, and at its close, all participants depart to attend the Founders and Invited Guests Performance. This formal event will showcase and honor four distinguished people – an artist, leader, philanthropist, and scholar – all whose work has made a significant impact on Blacks in dance.

Sheri “Sparkle” Williams, Inspirational Artist Award

The Inspirational Artist Award is given to an artist who has deepened and extended dances’ value, including their ability to foster new connections and to exemplify creativity and innovation. This award recipient has proven their commitment to the Black dance sector by their professional presence and by the difference made in the lives of every person their work has touched. Sheri Williams, a native Daytonian, currently embarks upon an unprecedented 45th season with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company and is also an original member of the New York based Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Ms. Williams has traveled the world covering five continents and has received numerous awards throughout her career. All to which she attributes the nurturing bestowed upon her by many dance educators and creators and most of all DCDC company founder, Jeraldyne Blunden. Sheri “Sparkle” Williams gives humble gratitude while crediting any and all of her accomplishments to her exceptional discipline acquired through dance and the invaluable guidance of her parents, whom she strives to represent proudly even during her fifth decade of life.
Richard Lapedes, IABD Distinguished Leadership Award

The IABD Distinguished Leadership Award honors excellence in distinguished leadership for the local arts community. The work of this individual is mission aligned with the partner organization while demonstrating unwavering community leadership, support, and dedication. They have been selected for their significant, tangible leadership contributions to the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company as well as their ability to make a difference in the lives of those they have helped. A native of Dayton, Ohio, Richard Lapedes graduated from Yale University in 1963 before attending Yale University Graduate School of Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications. With his wife, Maureen A. Lynch, he has supported Dayton Contemporary Dance Company since the 1970s and recognized early on the company’s exceptional artistic value. Since the 1980s, he has served intermittently on the company’s board of directors; currently, he has been the board chair since 2005. As an advocate of the arts, he has served on the boards of Culture Works, Dayton Art Institute, and Dayton Ballet. In terms of his work with Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Mr. Lapedes supports the company’s vision and continues to enable the company to broaden the scope and depth of the company’s art and social service.

Maureen A. Lynch, IABD Distinguished Leadership Award

Maureen A. Lynch is an active community leader who has volunteered for more than 35 years in support of women’s rights, civil rights and access to health care in Dayton and Yellow Springs, Ohio, where she resides. Lynch currently serves as Chair of the Antioch College Board of Trustees and as a member of the Board of The Dayton Foundation. Her connection to Dayton Contemporary Dance Company began in 1978 as an avid audience member. She served on the DCDC Board of Trustees in the 1990s, and has continued to love and support DCDC ever since. She was recognized in 2003 as one of the Dayton YWCA Women of Influence.

Halifu Osumare, Ph.D., Scholar's Award

The Scholars Award is presented to an individual who demonstrates outstanding achievements and whose contributions in the academic and research areas of dance deserve acknowledgment. This award honors the scholarly artist’s importance to the cultural fabric of the black dance community and the impact their research has on the dance field. The award recipient has proven to be committed to the mission of IABD and its philosophy which emphasized the continued responsibility of “carrying the torch” by preserving and promoting dance by people of African ancestry or origin. Halifu Osumare is Professor Emerita and Former Director of African American & African Studies at University of California, Davis. She holds a B.A. in Dance & Theater Arts, a M.A. in Dance Ethnology from San Francisco State University and a Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. She founded the national dance initiative known as Black Choreographers Moving Toward the 21st Century. She is also a Certified Instructor of Katherine Dunham Technique and the former Co-Director of the Institute for Dunham Technique Certification. As a choreographer and director, she is noted particularly for the theatrical works of poet and playwright, Ntozake Shange. Her vision of social justice, like her late mentor Katherine Dunham, is the integration of the arts with the humanities, as well as the mind, body, and spirit.
Reginald Van Lee, Outstanding Philanthropy Award

The Reginald Van Lee Outstanding Philanthropy Award honors an individual with a proven record of exceptional generosity who, through direct financial support, innovation, encouragement, and motivation of others demonstrate outstanding civic and charitable responsibility. Their generosity encourages others to take philanthropic leadership roles on a community, national and/or international level. Reginald Van Lee was born in Houston, Texas and he attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received his Bachelor’s and Master’s of Science degrees. Reggie soon went back to school to complete his MBA from the Harvard Business School. In celebration of their 50th anniversary, the Washington Performing Arts honored Mr. Van Lee for his strategic leadership and unwavering commitment to enhance the organization and embrace jazz, dance, and gospel. He is a master at strategic needs assessment and enormously effective in building trust to effect change. In 2013, he was appointed by President Obama to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Additionally, in 2009 President Obama appointed Mr. Van Lee to the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Mr. Van Lee serves as Chairman of the board of the Washington Performing Arts and of the National CARES Mentoring Movement. He is a Trustee of the Studio Museum in Harlem and is a member of the Executive Leadership Council.

The annual Gala and Awards Dinner is an opportunity for all Conference and Festival participants to formally gather and convene on the final evening. To date, IABD has held the Gala and Dinner to celebrate and honor over 100 illustrious Black dance pioneers, artists, and supporters. Robert Battle, Norma Miller, and Yvonne Daniel are some of the most recent Honorees. IABD believes in the power of collaboration and they provide these awards to bring awareness to these participants, leaders, and supporters of the Black dance field.

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About IABD

The International Association of Blacks in Dance preserves and promotes dance by people of African ancestry or origin, and assists and increases opportunities for artists in advocacy, audience development, education, funding, networking, performance, philosophical dialogue, and touring. IABD has become the Mecca for Blacks in Dance such as administrators, artists, choreographers, dance companies, directors, educators, scholars, and those interested in artistry, black dance issues, and performance presentations. The Association, founded in 1991, provides a network, formal newsletters, choreographers directory, published papers and is the raison d’être for the annual conference. The Association also responds to and initiates dialogue around issues that impact the Black Dance Community as well as the Dance community at large. IABD has developed national prominence and allowed the Black Dance Community to come together on issues important to them. [www.iabdassociation.org](http://www.iabdassociation.org)

About DCDC

Dayton Contemporary Dance Company was founded in 1968 by Jeraldyne Blunden to create performance opportunities for dancers of color. Five decades later, it remains rooted in the African American experience, committed to the development of diverse movement artists on the global stage. Rooted in the African American experience, the Dayton Contemporary Dance Company is a culturally diverse contemporary dance company committed to reaching the broadest audience through exceptional performance and arts-integrated education. [www.dcdc.org](http://www.dcdc.org)