



PRESS RELEASE

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## Judith Jamison, Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Named 2010-2011 Ambassador to the Arts by *Guide for the Arts*

NEW YORK, NY, November 1, 2010 -- Artistic Director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Judith Jamison has been named the 2010-2011 Ambassador to the Arts award winner by *Guide for the Arts*. Jamison is being honored for her 45 years of dedication and contributions to the Arts community.

Jamison, who has been at the AAADT helm since its founder's death in 1989, continued the company's advancement from a haven for black dancers who could not get work in the predominantly white dance world, into what is today one of the world's most highly regarded and successful modern-dance troupes.

Jamison's career as a dancer and choreographer with Alvin Ailey began in 1965 and has culminated in her most recent accomplishment, the \$56-million Joan Weill Center for Dance at Ninth Avenue and 55th Street in Manhattan.

Now 67, the tall (5' 10") ballet-trained dancer from Philadelphia who caught the attention of Ailey at age 22 was invited to join his company, and has since become a star and a legend on the world's modern dance stage. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the Kennedy Center Honors (1999) and the National Medal of Arts (2001).

Jamison won a prime time Emmy Award and an American Choreography Award for Outstanding Choreography for "Great Performances: Dance In America" special, "A Hymn for Alvin Ailey," for PBS.

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Her autobiography, "Dancing Spirit," was published in 1993.

"I was just an ordinary kid living in a row house in Philadelphia," Ms. Jamison says of her rise to the top spot in Ailey's company. "My father was a sheet metal worker, my mother was a homemaker, we lived very simply.

"Mr. Ailey spotted me and here I am today. Who knew a girl from a poor neighborhood in Pennsylvania could be given such a gift?" she said.

The Ambassador to the Arts Award is an annual honor given to those who have made a significant impact on the Arts. Jamison is being honored for her accomplishments on behalf of the Ailey Theater as well as for her work supporting new artists through a variety of programs within the New York Arts community.

"I think it's wonderful to be named Ambassador to the Arts for New York, I am proud of New York proud of the culture we have here, proud to be an ambassador for our city," Jamison said.

The Ambassador to the Arts Award is sponsored by *Guide for the Arts*, a groundbreaking publication for patrons, benefactors, artists and administrators. Established in Boston in 2001, Guide for the Arts has honored such luminaries as composer John Williams, Opera Legend Placido Domingo, Senator Edward Kennedy, Boston Ballet Artistic director Mikko Nissinen and the Institute of Contemporary Art's Director Jill Medvedow.

"It is an honor for us to be able to present the 2010-2011 Ambassador of the Arts award to Judith Jamison," says publisher and founder Kevin T. Wood. "Ms. Jamison has set the bar for American dance troupe directors with her unparalleled talent and commitment to the development of new artists."

#### ABOUT GUIDE FOR THE ARTS:

A must-have publication for serious arts patrons, GUIDE FOR THE ARTS is the only comprehensive source for complete arts schedules, special events, box office listings and performance hall information.

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