

## **Lifetime award for choreographer Jamison**

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By Kimberly C. Roberts

**Iconic dancer/choreographer Judith Jamison, a Philadelphia native and the former artistic director of the internationally acclaimed Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT) is one of four renowned leaders and achievers being honored for their lifetime accomplishments with the 33rd annual Common Wealth Awards of Distinguished Service.** The awards recognize individuals who have enriched modern society through their professional and personal endeavors.



The 2012 Common Wealth Award winners are:

- **Madeleine K. Albright**, 64th Secretary of State of the United States and the first woman to hold that office; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; for Government;
- **Wolf Blitzer**, lead political anchor for CNN; anchor of “The Situation Room” with Wolf Blitzer; for Mass Communications;
- **Kenneth Cole**, renowned American designer and humanitarian; Chairman, amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research; for Public Service;
- **Judith Jamison, celebrated dancer and choreographer; artistic director emerita of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (AAADT); for Dramatic Arts.**

The honorees will be recognized at the Common Wealth Awards ceremony hosted by The PNC Financial Services Group on Saturday, April 21 at the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington, Del.

**The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010, and the esteemed Judith Jamison ended her 22-year tenure as the company’s artistic director on July 1, 2011, handing the reins of the company over to the accomplished and capable Robert Battle.**

**“Fifty years means that we, with integrity, have sustained and elevated Alvin’s legacy,” said Jamison, who was hand-picked by founder Alvin Ailey to take over the company shortly before his death on Dec. 1, 1989. “All of us have. You need a leader, and fortunately I’ve been very blessed to be the leader, but the point is that all of us have been living in the same resonance, and that he really left a road map as to what works. And so what has worked is his philosophy to celebrate the African-American cultural expression and experience, and the modern dance tradition of our country. So now we’re the cultural ambassadors to the world.”**

The Common Wealth Awards of Distinguished Service were first presented in 1979 by The Common Wealth Trust, which was created under the will of Ralph Hayes, an influential business executive and philanthropist. The awards are now made by The Ralph Hayes Common Wealth Foundation, which is funded by the Common Wealth Trust. PNC serves as trustee and administrator of the Trust.

In the 33-year history of the Common Wealth Awards, \$5 million has been awarded to 181 honorees. The 2012 honorees will receive a shared award of \$300,000. Past recipients include Archbishop Desmond Tutu, author Toni Morrison, Academy Award winner Sidney Poitier and former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

“The 2012 Common Wealth Award winners represent the spectrum of human endeavors and the best of human achievement,” said PNC Regional President Nicholas M. Marsini, Jr. “They are leaders, innovators and artists who have used their singular talents to make a difference in our world. We applaud these individuals for their stellar accomplishments.”