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Houston Endowment Awards Transformational Gift to Support Capital Renovation and Future of Houston Ballet's Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance

Investment will modernize landmark arts facility, advance sustainability, and strengthen Houston's cultural infrastructure

HOUSTON, TEXAS – SEPTEMBER 1, 2026 – Houston Ballet today announced a generous leadership gift from Houston Endowment to support an ongoing comprehensive capital renovation initiative for Houston Ballet's Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance, one of Houston's most significant cultural assets and the largest facility in the country dedicated exclusively to dance. The investment will help ensure the facility continues to serve the 300,000 professional dancers, students, audience members, and community members who rely on it annually.

Opened in 2011, Houston Ballet's Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance has been a leader of Houston's arts ecosystem, providing space for artistic creation, education, community engagement, and public programming. As the facility celebrates its 15th anniversary this year, Houston Ballet is undertaking critical upgrades designed to enhance sustainability and environmental efficiency, safety, accessibility, and technological innovation.

The renovation initiative will address more than $4 million in capital needs, including energy-efficient LED lighting upgrades, HVAC automation modernization, rehearsal studio enhancements, security improvements, Dance Lab renovations, and facility-wide infrastructure updates. These investments are expected to improve daily operations, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and ensure the facility reflects the excellence, innovation, and ambition that define Houston Ballet.

"For nearly 15 years, the Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance has been at the heart of Houston Ballet's artistic life," said Artistic Director Stanton Welch AM. "It has given our dancers, students, and creative teams a world-class home where we have nurtured talent, developed new works, welcomed renowned artists from around the globe, and shared the transformative power of dance with our community. This investment from Houston

Endowment ensures that the Center will continue to support us well into the future and provide the foundation we need to dream bigger, create boldly, and shape the future of ballet from right here in Houston."

"We are grateful to Houston Endowment for its visionary investment in the future of Houston Ballet and the cultural vitality of our city, contributing to Houston's reputation as a premier destination for the performing arts," said Sonja Kostich, Houston Ballet's Executive Director. "This transformative support allows us to preserve and strengthen a facility that serves tens of thousands of Houstonians each year while ensuring future generations have access to best-in-class artistic experiences. These capital improvements will enhance every facet of our work, empowering our artists to create at the highest level, enriching the educational experience of Academy students, and providing our visitors with an exceptional environment for engagement and inspiration. This investment positions us to expand our impact and continue shaping the future of dance."

"The Center for Dance is an important part of Houston's cultural infrastructure and a nationally distinctive home for dance and the development of the next generation of artists," said Bao-Long Chu, Houston Endowment program director for arts & culture. "This investment is about taking care of an extraordinary asset Houston already has and ensuring it can continue to serve artists, students, and our community for years to come."

The renovation project builds upon Houston Ballet's long-standing commitment to responsible stewardship of its facilities. In recent years, the organization has invested in significant resilience and sustainability measures, including flood mitigation infrastructure and emergency power systems designed to protect the building and maintain operations during future crises. The planned improvements represent the next phase of that strategic investment, helping to reduce environmental impact while extending the life and functionality of the facility.

Beyond preserving a landmark building, the project will strengthen Houston's broader cultural landscape. Houston Ballet's Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance serves as a hub for artistic innovation, educational programming, community engagement, performances, and collaborations that attract artists and audiences from across the region and around the world.

Houston Ballet gratefully acknowledges Houston Endowment's leadership investment, along with the generous support of the Sarofim Foundation, The Wortham Foundation, and The Cullen Trust for the Performing Arts whose shared commitment is helping advance this vital renovation project and secure the future of Houston Ballet's Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance.

About Houston Endowment

Houston Endowment is a private foundation established in 1937 by Jesse H. Jones and his wife, Mary Gibbs Jones, to improve the quality of life for everyone in Greater Houston. Today, it has more than $2 billion in assets and invests approximately $100 million annually in strengthening public education, increasing civic engagement, enhancing the region's arts sector, and growing Houston's greenspaces, while also addressing emerging opportunities across the region. Working with fellow Houstonians, Houston Endowment pursues bold goals, builds partnerships, and invests in innovative solutions to create a vibrant region where all have the opportunity to thrive.

About Houston Ballet

Founded in 1969, Houston Ballet is one of the nation's leading ballet companies — an artistic force and an important business leader and partner in the Houston region — inspiring audiences through artistic excellence, bold choreography, and a commitment to the future of dance. Under the artistic leadership of Artistic Directors Julie Kent and Stanton Welch AM and the chief administrative leadership of Executive Director Sonja Kostich, the Company is home to the Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance, the largest professional dance facility in the country. Houston Ballet operates with a $47 million annual budget (FY27) and a $139 million endowment (as of June 2026), presents a diverse repertory of classical and contemporary works, and tours internationally with a global reach spanning 116 countries.

Houston Ballet Academy serves as a leading pipeline for emerging dance talent, training more than 1,000 students annually—most on scholarship. Through complementary Education and Community Engagement programs, the Company reaches more than 85,000 people annually, expanding access to dance across the Houston region.

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