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## Kansas City Ballet Announces New Board Members

KANSAS CITY, MO (July 20, 2022) — CiCi Rojas, president of the Kansas City Ballet Board of Directors, today announced the election of six new Board members: Lucy Coulson, Dr. Derald Davis, Dr. Donna Davis, Melissa Ford, Joab Ortiz and Marissa Wickam.

“On behalf of the Kansas City Ballet, we are delighted to welcome these outstanding individuals to our board. We believe they will bring diverse perspective and exceptional dedication to the Ballet’s efforts and initiatives. We look forward to welcoming their contributions in the years to come,” Rojas said.



**Lucy Coulson** was born and raised in Kansas City, MO, and attended St. Paul’s Episcopal Day School, Shawnee Mission East and then Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She received her master’s degree in education and taught at Sag Harbor Elementary in Sag Harbor, New York. She returned to Kansas City where she met and married Fred Coulson. Together, they started Five Elms Capital and are raising three children. She is actively engaged with Kansas City Ballet and the arts community.



**Dr. Derald Davis** is a native of Kansas City, MO, and has more than 25 years of experience in urban education as a teacher, principal, district leader and educational consultant. He currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion and Innovation for Kansas City Public Schools and is responsible for developing and advancing programs that enhance the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the school system. Dr. Davis is the recipient of numerous professional awards, including the Turnaround Leader Award from Kansas City Public Schools; the Joseph B. Whitehead Educator of Distinction Award from the Coca Cola Scholars Foundation; and the Ida B. Wells Risk Taker Award from the National Alliance of Black School Educators.



**Dr. Donna M. Davis** is currently a Professor of Educational Foundations in the School of Education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She has more than 30 years of experience in the field of education, spending nearly a decade teaching high school English in the Los Angeles Unified School District before earning her doctorate at the University of Kansas. Her doctoral dissertation examined the life and education of Langston Hughes. Dr. Davis teaches courses in the history and philosophy of education at UMKC. She has been published in numerous scholarly journals in the areas of urban education, multicultural education, philosophy of education, history of education, arts education, and social justice. She has presented at national conferences including the American Educational Research Association, American Educational Studies Association, Organization of Educational Historians, and the National Association of Multicultural Education. Most significantly, she is the mother of two artists, one of them being a Kansas City Ballet School alumna.



**Melissa Ford**, Director of Philanthropic Giving at University of Missouri-Kansas City's School of Science and Engineering, is an accomplished fundraising professional. Her fundraising has contributed to organizations including Kansas City Ballet, Girl Scouts of NE Kansas and NW Missouri, and United WE (formerly Women's Foundation). In addition, Melissa served as Executive Director for the Asthma and Allergy Foundation-Kansas City Chapter for over 5 years. Melissa has served 14 years on the Kansas City Ballet Guild and this year serves as President.



**Joab Ortiz** is an Associate Project Manager for Burns & McDonnell in Kansas City, where he leads public involvement efforts for various infrastructure projects throughout the community and nationally. He has more than 20 years of marketing and communications experience and a deep understanding of community relations gained by serving businesses and municipalities, state and other government agencies.

He has been involved with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Kansas City Chamber's Diversity Advisory Board and is immediate past Chairman of the Board of the Kansas City Kansas Chamber of Commerce. Joab is a 'dance dad' with his daughters being involved with dance for many years. He is currently serving on Kansas City Ballet's Inclusion Diversity Equity Access (IDEA) task force.



**Marissa Wickam** is a Program Officer for the Charitable Trusts and Foundations Office with the Commerce Trust Company. In this role she builds relationships with local nonprofits to assist in discretionary grantmaking for several private foundations including the William T. Kemper Foundation, the Richard J. Stern Foundation for the Arts, and the Oppenstein Brothers Foundation. Marissa joined Commerce Bank in 2015 as an intern and later Tax

Accountant for the Commerce Trust Company's west region private client tax team. She has her MSA from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. In the community, she volunteers her time with KC Can Compost and serves as the Board President for the Kansas City Ballet's young professionals group, BARRE KC.

## Media

Visit [kcballet.org](http://kcballet.org) or [kauffmancenter.org](http://kauffmancenter.org) for a downloadable media kit about Kansas City Ballet and the Kauffman Center. Find high-resolution photos at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/67555847@N06/sets>.

## About Kansas City Ballet

**MISSION:** *To Inspire and Engage Through the Beauty, Power & Passion of Dance*

**VISION:** *Outstanding Dance Experiences Accessible to All*

Founded in 1957, Kansas City Ballet is a professional ballet company led by Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director Jeffrey J. Bentley. Kansas City Ballet is an indispensable community asset through exceptional performances, excellence in dance training and quality community education programs for all ages. Kansas City Ballet is home to Kansas City Ballet School which, with an enrollment of more than 2,000 children and adults, offers professional training for the career-minded student as well as for those simply seeking a healthy lifestyle.

Through the professional company, second company (KCB II & Trainees), and community engagement and education programs, Kansas City Ballet seeks to nurture and develop artists, audiences, and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity, and joy of dance. The company's home, the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity, in conjunction with our Resident Company status at the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, positions Kansas City as a destination for dance. Visit [www.kcballet.org/kansas-city-ballet-press-releases/](http://www.kcballet.org/kansas-city-ballet-press-releases/) for more info.

Kansas City Ballet's website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Receive daily updates by joining the KCB Fan Page, [www.facebook.com/kcballet](http://www.facebook.com/kcballet), and following @kcballet on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/kcballet>. Follow our blog at [www.kcballet.org/blog](http://www.kcballet.org/blog). Watch videos at [www.youtube.com/kansascityballet](http://www.youtube.com/kansascityballet), and view photos at <https://www.instagram.com/kcballet/>.

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