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Kansas City Ballet Announces Retirement of Executive Director David Gray Effective December 31, 2026

KANSAS CITY, MO (March 31, 2026) — Carolyn W. Parkerson, president of the Kansas City Ballet Board of Directors, announced today that she has accepted with sadness and gratitude the resignation of **David Gray**, the company's executive director. Gray, with the ballet since 2023, has decided to retire, and his tenure will end effective December 31, 2026, following the company's performances of *The Nutcracker*. According to Parkerson, Kansas City Ballet has formed a committee to conduct a national search for a new executive director.

"On behalf of the entire Board, I want to thank David Gray for his dedicated service and impactful tenure at Kansas City Ballet. In his three years, David continued the upward trajectory of the organization, with ever-larger Kansas City audiences experiencing KCB's magical world of dance. We are grateful David leaves Kansas City Ballet stronger than ever with a committed and accomplished staff solidly prepared for KCB's next chapter. The sparkle of David's quick wit, charm, and colorful persona will be widely missed throughout the arts community," Parkerson said.

"It's been a great three years," said Gray. "We've increased sales, started a new Family Series, expanded our Nutcracker run, improved our HR functions, completed an endowment campaign and grown our

community partnerships. I have been honored to build on the legacy of my predecessor, Jeff Bentley, who spent 25 years building this organization.”

Gray, who has been writing screenplays in his spare time, plans to return to his writing. His first film, *Love Across Time*, was released in 2024.

“My wife and I have been living apart as she is a professor at Indiana University and we are very much looking forward to once again being under the same roof,” said Gray.

About David Gray

David Gray was raised in Princeton, NJ, and attended Johns Hopkins University. Following graduation, he moved to New York and worked in the Publicity Department of Doubleday Publishing before joining the Press Office of New York City Ballet where he soon became Press Director. He also met and married New York City Ballet Principal Dancer **Kyra Nichols**.

Upon the birth of their first child, Gray became a full-time parent so that his wife could return to her performing career. Later, he became the Executive Director of American Repertory Ballet and their Princeton Ballet School.

Gray then opened a consulting firm, Finance Arts LLC, where he combined his interests in finance and nonprofit management. He served as an itinerant Interim Executive Director for several nonprofits including the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault, The New Brunswick Cultural Center (where he was landlord for 3 theaters), and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. In addition to teaching classes on nonprofit management and finance, he wrote the *Finance Arts Guide to Nonprofit Cash Flow*, published in 2010.

What began as an interim position with the Pennsylvania Ballet (now Philadelphia Ballet) became a permanent one. While there, he oversaw the implementation of the new strategic plan. He later moved to Bloomington, Indiana when his wife was offered a tenured faculty position at Indiana University’s Jacobs School of Music and continued his writing and nonprofit consulting. A complete bio and headshot can be found at <https://kcballet.org/media-center/>.

Career Highlights and Accomplishments

Since Gray began his tenure in 2023, there have been several achievements to note:

- His determination to improve revenue streams has had remarkable results. The subscription revenue grew 11% and total revenue grew 26%. The endowment grew by 51%.
- In a commitment to making dance accessible to everyone, from young children to older adults, he established a community partnership initiative which has had tremendous impact including a 233% growth in student matinee attendance.
- The Partnership programs now bring dance to a broad range of community partners, everything from Healthy Aging classes for seniors with Parkinson’s and memory issues, to intro experiences for children at places ranging from Science City to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

- A focus on equitable HR policies and procedures has led to improvements in engagement and satisfaction.
- A new contract with American Guild of Musical Artists (the dancers' union) removed the "apprentice" label from new dancers and increased intro salaries to provide better remuneration for the youngest professionals.

Media

Visit kcballet.org/media-center or kauffmancenter.org for a downloadable media kit about Kansas City Ballet and the Kauffman Center. High-res rehearsal and past production photos and more can be found [here](#).

Social Media

Kansas City Ballet's website is mobile and ticket-purchase friendly. Join the KC Ballet [Facebook page](#), follow us at [@kc.ballet on Instagram](#), [LinkedIn at @kansas-city-ballet](#), and [TikTok at @kansascityballet](#). Watch videos at youtube.com/kansascityballet. Be sure to check out our blog at kcballet.org/blog.

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 30+ member professional ballet company under the direction of Artistic Director Devon Carney and Executive Director David Gray. Kansas City Ballet is a resident company at the world-class Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts, and each season features an eclectic repertory including traditional classics and exciting contemporary dances. Our professional company, the second company (comprised of KCB II and Trainees), professional dance school, and partnership programs, seek to nurture and develop our artists, audiences, and students in the values inherent in the creativity, diversity, and joy of dance.

Kansas City Ballet reaches more than 20,000 students and adults each year through our many community partnerships and education programs for all ages. The Kansas City Ballet School offers professional dance training for the career-minded student as well as for those simply seeking a healthy lifestyle for over 2,000 students each year in two locations: the Todd Bolender Center for Dance & Creativity in downtown and our South Campus at Meadowbrook in Prairie Village, KS.

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