

Houston Ballet Foundation
Meeting of the Board of Trustees

MINUTES

Monday, February 24, 2025

Call to order: The Houston Ballet Meeting of the Board of Trustees was held in the Margaret Alkek Williams Dance Lab on Monday, February 17th, 2025, in Houston, Texas. Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT:

Mrs. F.T. Barr, Mr. James Cowan, Ms. Michelle Iversen Jeffery, Mr. Jesse H. Jones II, Mrs. Jennifer Laporte, Mrs. Cabrina Owsley, Mrs. Amy Pincu, Mrs. Carroll Robertson Ray, Mr. Kent A. Schaffer, Stephanie Tsuru, Ms. Hallie Vanderhider, Mr. Nicholas Baran, Mrs. Diane Bazelides, Ms. Ann C. Bean, Mrs. Susan Binney, Mrs. Lenni Burke, Mr. Michael Collins, Mrs. Margaret Vaughan Cox, Mrs. Pamela D. Earthman, Mrs. Jo Furr, Mrs. Marianne Geagea, Anne Graubart, Mrs. Jayne S. Johnston, Mr. James M. Jordan, Ms. Amy LeBlanc, Ms. Judy Liu, Mrs. Jean E. May, Mrs. Martha Rocks McMurrey, Mrs. Andrea Medina, Ms. Nancy Powell Moore, Ms. Beth Muecke, Mrs. Patti Murphy, Mrs. Teal Tigner Reamer, Ms. Melissa Reihle, Mrs. Akemi Saitoh, Mr. Aaditya Satija, Dannika E. Simpson, Mrs. Leigh M. Smith, Ms. S. Shawn Stephens, Mrs. Paula Whitten-Doolin

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelli Gilson, Julie Kent, Rachel Koenig, Paige Kutschall, Angie Lane, Angela Lee, Jim Nelson, Kristi Roberts, Jennifer Sommers, Simon Thew, Stanton Welch AM

GUESTS PRESENT:

Wendy Smith-Butler, Tetsuya Lawson

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru greeted everyone and welcomed Michael Bertuccio to the Houston Ballet Board. With a quorum present, the minutes from the September 23rd meeting were approved.

SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT

Mrs. Tsuru congratulated Kristy and Chris Bradshaw, Mellisa Juneau, Deborah, and Ed Koehler on an incredibly successful Ballet Ball. She noted that the night was full of joy and energy, raising over \$1.6 million for the Houston Ballet. She further congratulated Jack Wolff on such a fun surprise piece to celebrate the Koehler's and reviewed the auction items still available for bidding.

Mrs. Tsuru then encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming Raising the Barre event in May, sharing how fun it is to interact with the dancers. She then invited Mrs. Angie Lane to the podium.

Mrs. Angie Lane congratulated Megan Kessler and Tracey Williford on a record-breaking Houston Ballet Nutcracker Market. The event resulted in over \$23 million in total sales, allowing for a donation

of \$6.3 million to benefit the Houston Ballet Academy. She reviewed how Nutcracker Market is truly impactful for the City of Houston and noted the diversity of the shoppers and how important that is to Houston Ballet's IDEA commitment.

Looking ahead to the 2025 Nutcracker Market, Mrs. Angie Lane shared that the fashion shows and luncheons will be renamed the "Snow Queen's Fashion Show and Luncheon" and the "Sugar Plum's Fashion Show and Luncheon." This change aims to strengthen the tie between the Company and the Market.

Mrs. Angie Lane thanked the Guild volunteers for their incredible work in making the Market so successful, including selecting the merchants. She shared how selling merchandise at the Market impacts each merchant's small business. With this, she noted Houston Ballet's partnership with Wells Fargo in creating access for merchants through the Small Business Diversity Program. She shared how two of the original merchants are on track to graduate from the program for the 2025 Market.

Furthermore, Mrs. Angie Lane expressed her gratitude to the Houston Ballet Trustees, who have had such an impact on the Market, and our corporate sponsors – highlighting Mattress Firm's massage chairs.

Mrs. Angie Lane also shared how the Development Team has worked significantly this year to build the Nutcracker Market brand and social media channels.

She closed her presentation by sharing her excitement for the 2025 Houston Ballet Nutcracker Market, chaired by Susan Binney and Jennifer Kushner, honoring the Houston Ballet Academy.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked Mrs. Lane for her presentation and for her leadership of the Market.

She then continued into the President's Report.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Tsuru briefly overviewed the search for Houston Ballet's next Executive Director. She noted that a small group of Trustees, alongside the Director of HR and Artistic Directors, selected Russell Reynolds to assist in the search.

She then invited Mr. Jim Nelson to give the Executive Director's report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Nelson began his report by thanking Angie Lane for her leadership of the Nutcracker Market and her remarkable impact on Houston Ballet during her tenure.

He then recognized the passing of Katrina Arnim, longtime Houston Ballet Guild member and supporter, who was an integral part of the Nutcracker Market.

Mr. Nelson then reviewed the internal January month-end financials. He also discussed Houston Ballet's service of our structural debt by way of the Plant Fund subsidy which began in FY2023. He stressed that as the Plant Fund is depleted, it is imperative to grow the Houston Ballet Endowment to \$200 million by 2035 to keep Houston Ballet thriving.

ARTISTIC DIRECTORS' REPORT

Mr. Stanton Welch opened the Artistic Directors' report, reviewing the upcoming repertory soon to be on the Wortham stage. Mrs. Julie Kent noted how wonderful it has been to have guests and staggers in the studio, especially to have Ben Stevenson see the Company rehearse *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Mr. Welch and Mrs. Kent then shared the upcoming 2025-26 Season! Mr. Stanton Welch closed his report by encouraging our trustee group to attend *The Sleeping Beauty* not only to see the wonderful ballet but also to see Houston Ballet's very own Jim Nelson and Lauren Anderson as the King and Queen.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked Stanton and Julie for their report and invited Mrs. Jennifer Sommers to the podium.

Mrs. Sommers then shared about the Houston Ballet Academy's participation in the Prix de Lausanne. She then introduced HBII dancer Henry Lichtemacher, whose piece was selected to perform at Prix as a finalist for the Young Creation Award. Furthermore, she congratulated Henry for his piece being chosen as one of the two winners of the Award, noting how his piece is now a part of the library for contemporary variations for future competitors to select to perform. Henry then shared some insights into his work and introduced it to the audience.

Mrs. Stephanie Tsuru thanked Alex Westerman for his performance and congratulated Henry Lichtemacher on his piece. She then invited everyone to the reception following the meeting.

Adjournment: With no old or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.