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1111 16th St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036

Press Contact:
Jim Byers
Email: jbpr@prodigy.net
Ph: 202.746.3165

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Tina Ramirez and Sali Ann Kriegsman to Be Honored by Dance/USA

Washington, DC – Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional, not-for-profit dance, announces its two awardees for 2009, selecting dancer, choreographer and Ballet Hispanico founder **TINA RAMIREZ** to receive the *Dance/USA Honor* award, and writer, advocate, presenter, preservationist and dance leader **SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN** to receive the “*Ernie*,” named for the late Ian “Ernie” Horvath. Both awards will be presented on **June 4, 2009** during the Dance/USA Honors Celebration at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, as part of the **Dance/USA Annual Conference** being held June 3 – 6 in Houston, Texas. Presented annually by the Dance/USA Board of Trustees, the **Dance/USA Honor** and the “*Ernie*” are awarded to *outstanding members of the national dance community*.

Tina Ramirez will be recognized with the *Dance/USA Honor* for her extraordinary and lasting contributions to the field, including the founding in 1970 of the nation’s leading Hispanic dance company, Ballet Hispanico. **Sali Ann Kriegsman** will receive the “*Ernie*”, a tribute to the “unsung heroes” of our field. A tireless champion for dance, she will be recognized for her work ‘behind the scenes’ that empowered artists, supported their creativity, and preserved their work for future generations.

Ms. Ramirez will join an illustrious group of past Dance/USA “**Honor**” **recipients** including Anna Halprin, Antony Tudor, Martha Graham, Robert Joffrey, Merce Cunningham, Agnes de Mille, Paul Taylor, Alvin Ailey, Katherine Dunham, Bella Lewitzky, Charles Reinhart, Alexandra Danilova, William Christensen, Donald McKayle, Bruce Marks, Judith Jamison, David White, Jeraldine Blunden, Dr. Charles “Chuck” Davis, and Arthur Mitchell. Ms. Kriegsman will take her place among fellow “**Ernie**” **recipients** Madeline Nichols, Sage Cowles, Cora Cahan, John Killacky, Norton Owen, Deborah Jowitt, Ivan Sygoda, Barbara Horgan, Bessie Schonberg, Martha Hill Davies, Richard E. LeBlond, Jr, and Ian Horvath.

The Dance/USA Honors Celebration is cause for reflection upon an individual’s contributions to dance in America and an acknowledgement of the roles they play in the national dance community. Founded in 1982, **Dance/USA** is *the sole national service organization for professional dance*, representing a membership of nearly 400 leading ballet, modern, ethnic, jazz and tap companies, dance service and presenting organizations, artist managers, educational institutions, business affiliates and individuals.

next page >>>

Dance/USA 2009 Award – page two



TINA RAMIREZ was born in Venezuela, the daughter of a Mexican bullfighter and granddaughter to a Puerto Rican educator. That combination of feisty agility and dedication has proven to be a recipe for success, inspiring her to found Ballet Hispanico in 1970. Ms. Ramirez' lifetime work as a professional dancer, educator and producer earned her a 2005 National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest cultural honor.

As a young adult, Ms. Ramirez studied classical, contemporary, and Spanish dance traditions alongside great figures in dance that shaped her aesthetic. She began her performing career with the Federico Rey Dance Company with which she toured internationally, followed by the Broadway productions of *Kismet*, *Lute Song* and the television adaptation of *Man of La Mancha*.

Tina Ramirez once told her Spanish dance teacher that she "wanted to be just like her," and that she did – setting aside a successful performing career to continue the educational legacy of her retiring Spanish dance teacher and mentor, Lola Bravo, in 1963. This laid the foundation for the Ballet Hispanico School of Dance, which provides children today with the same well-balanced training of classical, contemporary and Spanish dance that Ms. Ramirez enjoyed as a young adult.

The countless awards and honors Ms. Ramirez has received in recognition of her work as founder and artistic director include the *Dance Magazine* Award, the Hispanic Heritage Award for Education, Capezio Dance Award, New York State Governor's Arts Award, New York City Mayor's Award of Honor for Arts & Culture. Ms. Ramirez currently serves on the board of The New 42nd Street, and as Co-Chair for the New York City Department of Education Dance Curriculum Blueprint Committee. She has served on numerous panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, as well as the board of the Association of Hispanic Arts.

SALI ANN KRIEGSMAN's efforts to advance the art and artists of dance and to nurture greater appreciation of the arts include her work as a writer, critic, editor, funder, artistic and executive director, presenter, producer, teacher and adviser.



She has served as artistic adviser to the Digital Dance Library planning project, president of the Dance Heritage Coalition (the alliance of major American dance collections), executive director of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, director of the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Program, dance consultant to the Smithsonian Institution, executive editor at The American Film Institute, and administrator of The American Dance Theater, the first professional modern dance repertory company, co-directed by Jose Limon and Anna Sokolow at Lincoln Center. She has taught and lectured at schools, universities, festivals, museums and community centers across the country and abroad, and advised private and public funding agencies. Her book, ***Modern Dance in America: The Bennington Years***, the first exhaustive documentary history of that legendary period, was hailed by *The New York Times* as "a vivid and human picture of a crucial chapter in American culture." Her articles, criticism and essays have been published in a variety of periodicals and reference sources.

Among her awards is the NEA's 1989 Distinguished Service Award, the 1997 Flo-Bert, shared with Donald O'Connor and Milt Hinton; the 1999 Preservation of our Heritage--American Dance Award from Oklahoma City University; the 2002 Tap Preservation Award from the New York Tap Festival and the 2006 Tradition in Tap Award for her contribution to the art and tradition of tap dance. She currently serves on the board of Meredith Monk/The House Foundation. Her bio is included in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who of American Women*. Her papers are housed in the Alan M. and Sali Ann Kriegsmann Collection, Library of Congress.

For more information about the Dance/USA Honor and "Ernie," or for information on the 2009 Dance/USA Annual Conference, visit www.danceusa.org.

-30-

In support of its mission to advance the art form of dance, Dance/USA is grounded in the conviction that the concerns and aspirations of dance artists and institutions can be addressed effectively through active, cooperative endeavors with its membership, the broader dance field, and with other performing arts disciplines. Since its founding in 1982, Dance/USA has evolved to become the sole national service organization representing the great diversity of organizations and dance genres that exist in the field. Membership today includes almost 400 ballet, modern, ethnic, jazz and tap companies, dance service and presenting organizations, artist managers, educational institutions, business affiliates and individuals, both nationwide and international. Core programs and services consist of **Public Communications** in the form of publications, and web, email and media communications; **Advocacy** on Capitol Hill in support of federal policies designed to strengthen arts organizations and individual artists, in the media to represent a unified voice for the field, and in the philanthropic community to articulate the field's needs; **Research and Information Services** in the form of statistical information on professional dance through data research and needs assessments; **Professional Development** workshops, training seminars and annual meetings; and **Special Projects**.