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ADF MOURNS THE LOSS OF DR. GERALD E. MYERS (1923 – 2009),
A LEADING AUTHORITY ON WILLIAM JAMES AND
PHILOSOPHER-IN-RESIDENCE AT THE AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL

Durham, N.C. -- The American Dance Festival (ADF) mourns the loss of Dr. Gerald E. Myers, 85, one of its most beloved family members. Dr. Myers, affectionately known as "Gerry," passed away in the presence of his family at their New London, CT home on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 after a courageous two and a half year battle with Multiple Myeloma. Dr. Myers, a leading authority on William James, penned William James: Writings, 1878-1899 (ed.) (The Library of America, 1992) and William James: His Life and Thought (1986), the latter of which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Dr. Myers accomplished much in his celebrated career, including the honor of being the first long-term Philosopher-In-Residence at any performing arts institution in the United States. "His work in both the world of philosophy and the world of dance was groundbreaking. He brought the verbal and the nonverbal worlds together as only a philosopher could do," states ADF Director Charles Reinhart. Dr. Myers is praised in both the fields of dance and philosophy for bringing the two very divergent worlds together. His most recently published book, Who's Not Afraid of Martha Graham? (2008), is a highly selective look at American modern dance that draws substantially upon his four decades of ADF participation and examines modern dance through a philosopher's eyes. In addition, his Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections on a Dark Time (co-ed.) (1988) was the first major attempt by the world of philosophy to deal with the Holocaust.

In the early 1970s, Charles Reinhart and the late Stephanie Reinhart, ADF's Co-Directors, invited Dr. Myers to assist with projects for advancing public appreciation of the aesthetic and cultural significance of modern dance. In addition to directing numerous panel discussions, dance demonstrations, and open dialogues on various dance-related topics, Dr. Myers led many notable projects at the ADF. Highlights of these projects include an institute for college and university professors entitled "Interpreting the African-American Experience Through the Performing Arts" (1991), leadership of the ADF's Looking at Dance series, and his integral role in ADF's "The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance" projects, which culminated in the national PBS broadcast of ADF's Emmy award-winning documentary series, Free to Dance. Dr. Myers also collaborated with his wife, Martha, then a member of the ADF Dance Faculty as well as Dean of the school on many projects bringing together the worlds of dance and philosophy.

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Dr. Myers has edited project publications for numerous ADF programs: *Philosophical Essays on Dance* (1979), a collection of papers and comments by aestheticians, choreographers and critics; *The Aesthetic and Cultural Significance of Modern Dance* (1984), which includes essays by scholars and a photographic exhibition on the history of American modern dance; *The Black Tradition in American Modern Dance* (1988), containing cultural/historical essays focusing on the early African-American presence in modern dance; *African American Genius in Modern Dance* (1993), selecting for special attention examples of African-American dance genius in the post-World War II period; *Reflections on the Home Of An Art Form*, the special 65th anniversary booklet about the history of the ADF; and *Modern Dance, Jazz and American Culture*.

Dr. Myers received his B.A. degree from Haverford College and later his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Brown University. He taught Philosophy at several campuses, including Brown, Smith, Williams, and Kenyon, retiring as philosopher emeritus in 1991 at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York where he was Acting Executive Officer of the Philosophy Ph.D Program from 1978-80. Dr. Myers authored or edited numerous books, articles, and lectures in aesthetics, philosophy of psychology, American philosophy, dance, and contemporary issues. In addition to those previously mentioned, his books include *Self: An Introduction to Philosophical Psychology* (1969), *Self, Religion, and Metaphysics* (ed.) (1961), and *The Spirit of American Philosophy* (ed.) (1970). Dr. Myers recently completed a new book on introspection titled, "*I*" (*Different from You and Me*).

The son of a Quaker minister, Dr. Myers leaves behind a loving family. In addition to his wife, Martha Myers, Dean Emeritus of the ADF, Dr. Myers is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Curt & Leslie Myers, as well as by three grandchildren: Drew (9), Evan (7), and Adam (18 months), all of New York City. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Gerald E. Myers American Dance Festival Scholarship Fund or the Connecticut College Department of Dance.

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