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**AMERICAN DANCE FESTIVAL 2016 SEASON
DEDICATED TO JUDITH SAGAN**

Durham, NC, February 16, 2016—The American Dance Festival (ADF) will dedicate its 83rd season to long-time friend and supporter of ADF, **Judith Sagan**. The ceremony honoring Sagan will be held **Thursday, June 16th at 8:00pm** prior to the season opening performance of *Pilobolus* at the **Durham Performing Arts Center**.

Born in 1928, Judy started ballet lessons at age 8 and fell in love with the form, especially after seeing the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. While she was a student at the University of Chicago, she saw her first modern dance, José Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*, and it opened her mind to a new way of expressing ideas and of telling stories through an entirely different form of movement.

In 1964, there was very little theater activity in Chicago. She and her husband, Bruce Sagan, had purchased the Harper Theater building to house the office of their *Hyde Park Herald* newspaper. They realized that they could fill a void using the theater to host plays, chamber music groups, and small dance companies. The first Harper Theater Dance Festival, a six-week season in 1965, included seven dance companies, among them the Paul Taylor Dance Company, the Robert Joffrey Ballet Company, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. It became the pilot project for the National Endowment for the Arts Residency Touring program. The festival continued for 10 years and brought many different troupes to Chicago, some of them, such as *Pilobolus*, for the first time.

During the early 1970s, Sagan served on and chaired the dance advisory panel of the National Endowment for the Arts. She also started attending ADF performances in Connecticut. Later she became a member of the ADF Advisory Board and in 1978 joined the ADF Board of Directors.

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Judy served as ADF Board Chairperson from 1981 to 1992 and as Secretary from 1993 to 2008. Her work on the ADF Board continues to be invaluable. When the festival purchased its first permanent studios in 2012, Judy and her family established the Judith Sagan Lobby.

ADF Director Jodee Nimerichter stated, “We have been so lucky to have had Judy as a faithful colleague, supporter, and friend for so many years. Judy’s long association with ADF has helped to shape the organization and in doing so has helped to further the role of modern dance into the 21st century.”

PHOTOGRAPHY AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

About ADF:

Founded in 1934 in Bennington, Vermont, ADF remains an international magnet for choreographers, dancers, teachers, students, critics, musicians, and scholars to learn and create in a supportive environment. ADF’s wide range of programs includes performances, artist services, educational programs and classes, community outreach, national and international projects, archives, humanities projects, publications, and media projects. ADF has been presenting the best in modern dance for 83 years. americandancefestival.org.

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