

Brenda Dixon Gottschild

WRITER ON DANCE AND CULTURE

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About Joan Myers Brown

Ms. Brown is the founder of The Philadelphia Dance Company (**PHILADANCO**) and The Philadelphia School of Dance Arts. She serves as honorary chairperson for the International Association of Blacks in Dance, an organization she established in 1991. She is also founder of the International Conference of Black Dance Companies. She is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of the Arts, which bestowed upon her an honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts, and is a member of the dance faculty at Howard University in Washington, DC. She was also awarded an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters by Ursinus College and has made significant contributions to the national and international arts communities.

Joan Myers Brown has served a broad range of regional and national organizations, including NEFA's National Dance Project, the United States Information Agency, Arts America, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Councils of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Michigan, Nevada, and Ohio and the National Forum for Female Executives. Locally, she has been a part of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, the Minority Arts Resource Council, the Philadelphia Mayor's cultural Advisory Council, the Philadelphia Dance Alliance, The Women's Heritage Society and the Coalition of African American Cultural Organizations, which she served as vice president.

Ms. Brown's expertise and counsel have been sought by many organizations, including the Rockefeller Foundation's Arts & Humanities Program. She served as a trustee of the Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation and the Media Performing Arts Center. Ms. Brown was a member of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce Arts & Business Council, World Dance Alliance Americas, University City Board of Directors, Dance/USA and other non-profit organizations.

She has convened four International Conferences of Black Dance Companies, facilitated the Smithsonian Institution's Conference of Black Dance Companies and served as a consultant to East Coast Committee of Festival 2000, the San Francisco Bay Area Cultural Initiative, the NEA "Dance on Tour" ad hoc committee and the Kennedy Center Adult Education Task Force.

Ms. Brown was honored as one of the "Dance Women; Living Legends" during a four-day series sponsored by New York area presenters, in tribute to five African-American pioneer women who founded distinguished modern dance companies with deep roots in black communities around the country. In 2005, The Kennedy Center honored her as a Master of African American Choreography. Most recently she received the Philadelphia Award.

The success of her seemingly unending energy has been appreciated and recognized by the numerous requests for her keen input from such notable organizations as Pennsylvania State Council of the Arts, Ohio State Arts Council, New Jersey State Arts Council, National Endowment for the Arts, National Association for Female Executives, Port of History Museum (Ad Hoc Committee), Media Associates (Washington, DC), Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Wade Communications, Spruce Family Planning, Minority Arts Resource Council, West Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, Mayor's Cultural Advisory Council, Advisory Panel for NEA, Expansion Arts Program, Executive Council of the Philadelphia Dance Alliance, Arts Administration for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Women's Heritage Society, Painted Bride and Dance/USA and the Philadelphia Arts Alliance.

Ms. Brown's efforts on behalf of dance excellence belie a much larger contribution to the arts and the community. She remains a tireless advocate and spokesperson and is a model of tenacity, hope and discipline. She is the proud mother of daughters Marlisa and Dannielle, who teach at her schools, The Philadelphia School of Dance Arts and grandmother of six.



"Founded by Joan Myers Brown, a steel-willed visionary, Philadanco has grown from a grass-roots enterprise to a nationally recognized institution. With Ms. Brown, it has played an important role in promoting dance by predominantly black troupes like hers and in helping to give them a stronger voice as shapers of American dance today."

— Jennifer Dunning, *The New York Times*

About PHILADANCO

Joan Myers Brown founded the Philadelphia Dance Company (PHILADANCO) in 1970. Created out of a need to provide opportunities for Black dancers, who were then systematically denied entrance in many local dance schools, PHILADANCO has since grown into a professional dance company that is recognized across the nation and around the world for its artistic integrity, superbly trained dancers and electrifying performances. Established on principles of providing opportunity, inclusion and hope, PHILADANCO bridges cultural divide and consistently performs for sold-out audiences representing an amalgamation of people from diverse ethnicities and communities.

If you like your dance virtuosic, spiritually uplifting and socially conscious, don't miss PHILADANCO"
– *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

With its home base on Philadanco Way in West Philadelphia, PHILADANCO provides one of the nations most innovative and successful dance training programs. A myriad of company support systems and intensive trainings enable dancers to develop their talent and refine their technical skills. Often described as "a miracle of skill and energy," "fascinating and thrilling," and performers with "blazing physicality," PHILADANCO dancers are among the best of the best.

PHILADANCO is a company representing a history of "first" accomplishments. Building on this company tradition, PHILADANCO founded the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD), which addresses the special needs of the African American dance community in a supportive environment, and produces an annual conference.

Joan's artistic accomplishments and contributions to the dance world occupy a special place in history. Generations of dancers have her to thank for the doors she opened. For years, I've appreciated her wisdom, enthusiasm and support. Joan has been a trailblazer in her professional life, and I feel fortunate to call her a friend.

– Michael M. Kaiser, President, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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Joan Myers Brown & the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina

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Contact:

Sacha Adorno | 267-243-1593 | sacha@SachaAdorno.com or Laura Henrich | 484-467-4315 | lahenrich@gmail.com