

# M a k i n g D a n c e Education an Institution

*A gift from Jody and John Arnhold  
advances a lifelong vision*

**J**ODY AND JOHN ARNHOLD HAVE DONATED \$6.085 million to Teachers College to launch an institute dedicated to developing leadership and expanding the evidence base in dance education through new research and reevaluation of existing knowledge.

The Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership will champion research informing public policies to eliminate disparities in the availability of high-quality dance education — especially in pre-K–12 public education — caused by an overall lack of access to the arts and opportunities for embodied learning.

“This is an enormous opportunity for Teachers College to affect the fundamental conditions of growth and human development for young people nationally,” said TC President Thomas Bailey.

The Arnholds’ gift builds on their 2016 commitment to TC of \$4.365 million, which established the nation’s only doctoral program in dance education.

“The Arnhold Institute at Teachers College is a critically important step toward realizing the vision to which I’ve devoted my career — a quality, sequential dance education for every child,” said Jody Gottfried Arnhold (M.A. ’73), who taught dance in New York City public schools for 25 years and earned her Dance Education master’s degree at TC.

The Arnhold Institute crowns a decades-long series of creative and philanthropic efforts undertaken by Arnhold — called “the godmother of dance” by *The Wall Street Journal* — to create a pipeline of professionals to serve the field of dance education on different fronts.

[Visit [tc.edu/dancemaker](http://tc.edu/dancemaker) to read a profile of Jody Gottfried Arnhold from *TC Today*.]

An early partnership between the public school where Arnhold taught and Ballet Hispánico showed her the power of a dance educator and cultural organization working together in a school. Subsequently, as



## STAGING A VISION

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board chair, she helped build Ballet Hispánico into an internationally acclaimed performance and teaching force. Arnhold also founded the 92Y Dance Education Laboratory (DEL); served as Co-Chair of the New York City Department of Education Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance (pre-K–12); created a graduate dance education program at Hunter College as a pipeline for prepared and certified dance educators; and created TC’s doctoral program, which prepares university-level faculty to teach dance educators and conduct research. Arnhold also served as executive producer of *PS DANCE!*, the 2015 EMMY-nominated documentary film about dance education in New York City.

“As a result of Jody’s foresight, commitment and generosity, there are now generations of new certified dance teachers teaching in K–12 schools and a growing corps of faculty at universities and colleges,” says Barbara Bashaw, TC’s new Arnhold Professor of

Practice, Director of the Dance Education Program and Director of the Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership. “Now, because of the Arnhold Institute, there will be strong, trained voices using data to create a broader environment that supports and enhances the power of dance and dance education.”

Both TC’s doctoral program and the new Arnhold Institute seek to advance pre-K–12 dance education in public schools. The



Institute’s research will inform policy and practice, providing much-needed guidance and evidence-based recommendations for dance educators, school systems, universities and cultural organizations. The Institute will also pair TC students and faculty with practitioners from the broader dance education landscape.

“Jody Arnhold has demonstrated time and again how big ideas are transformed into breakthrough initiatives through the power of strategic philanthropic partnerships with outstanding academic institutions,” says Suzanne M. Murphy, TC’s Vice President for Development & External Affairs. “In this case, her big idea — and dream — of making dance education an essential part of every schoolchild’s experience is now closer to being realized through a partnership with Teachers College and its extensive research and teaching expertise.”

The Arnhold Institute will “act as a leadership academy for dance educators.”

— BARBARA BASHAW

# Why An Institute?

*To those in the dance world, the answers are obvious*

**CHILDREN ARE** our youngest artists,” says Jody Gottfried Arnhold (M.A. ’73). “Dance gives them another way to express themselves. It involves them in collaborative learning and problem-solving and brings them to the realization that, in any endeavor, the first time is not always best — it is important to reflect on what you have done and then try it again.”

Yet “we are fighting ignorance about dance and what dance can do educationally,” says Ana Fragoso, Director of Dance at New York City’s Department of Education (DOE).

“To change a cultural perspective about dance, data and research are needed,” says Paul King, Executive Director of the Office of the Arts and Special Projects at the DOE.

Enter TC’s new Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership.

“Jody has thought of everything here,” says Joan Finkelstein, Executive Director of the Harkness Foundation. “We are very fortunate to have a philanthropist-expert like Jody Arnhold.”

The Arnhold Institute seeks to power a national movement that starts at the grassroots level. It will generate policy recommendations that can persuade parents to demand dance instruction in schools,

prompt principals to say “yes” and convince legislators to approve funding. The Institute will also develop TC’s doctoral students as leaders capable of driving change in school districts and statehouses.

And because successful dance programs in educational contexts require “immense leadership capacity,” the Institute will act as “a leadership academy for dance educators,” says its Director, Barbara Bashaw, TC’s Arnhold Professor of Practice and Director of the Dance Education Program. “For example, through participatory research, we could understand how dance educators construct leadership and thus how to prevent dance teacher attrition, a significant problem for the field.”

In part, the Institute will address the misperception that, as an art form — particularly a physical one — dance lacks “academic” value. To the contrary, “People understand and retain information better when they experience it through the senses — especially young children,” says former American Ballet Theatre dancer Ted Warburton, Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who will join the Arnhold Institute next year as its inaugural Senior Fellow.

In fact, dance can impart

lessons well beyond the aesthetic. “We use dance to teach students awareness of how they interact as a community,” says Virginia Johnson, Artistic Director of Dance Theatre of Harlem. “There are wonderful programs that use dance to teach math or social studies.”

Bashaw also hopes to address the “historic cycle of inequity in our nation that unjustly limits who gets to study dance and ultimately gain entry into the artistry and teaching professions.” And Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director and CEO of Ballet Hispánico, sees a need to “decolonize” dance and dance education.

“Think about *Hamilton*,” Vilaro says. “It might never have been done. For the world to start looking at its own true identity, we need institutions that open a window to the needs of the community in total.”

To that end, the Arnhold Institute will prioritize partnership-building. Indeed, as it brings research and policy into practice, says John Tomlinson, Executive Director of the Paul Taylor Dance Company, “we will see audiences and appreciation for the art form grow, and a generation of individuals with broader intellectual capacity and curiosity.”

Arnhold puts it more simply.

“Dance educators are my heroes, from beginning teachers to master teachers. I consider them to be at the highest level of achievement. I would like them to be famous the way dance artists are famous, because they are working with our youngest artists — children and teens in our schools.” 