

The University of Michigan Regents Communication Request for Action

Subject: Report of Faculty Death

Action Requested: Adoption of Memorial Statement

The Regents of the University of Michigan acknowledge with profound sadness the death of **Judith Rice**, clinical associate professor of performing arts (dance) in the School of Music Theatre & Dance. Professor Rice died on May 12, 2026.

Professor Rice's formation as a dancer and educator began at Jordan College of Music at Butler University, followed by seven years of study at the National Ballet School of Canada (Diploma, 1980), and private training at the Joffrey Ballet School with master teacher Finis Jhung. Her performing career included a soloist position with The Joffrey Ballet, principal dancer roles with American Ballet Comedy, and a celebrated appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson* in 1984. She joined the U-M Department of Dance as adjunct lecturer in 1990, advancing to clinical associate professor of performing arts in 2001, while also serving as ballet faculty at the Flint School of the Performing Arts and the Dance Masters of America Teacher Training Program at the University of Buffalo.

At U-M, Professor Rice served as artistic director for numerous Power Center productions and rehearsal director for works by Paul Taylor, Lucinda Childs, Richard Alston, and Alonzo King. She mentored generations of students, chaired BFA thesis concerts, and served on recruitment and curriculum committees for decades. Beyond campus, she was a guest teacher, adjudicator, and recruiter at hundreds of studios and conventions nationwide, co-founded Alpha Dance Convention, and produced the widely distributed *Behind Barres* instructional series. A recurring contributor to *Dance Teacher Magazine*, including a 2013 cover profile, she received the inaugural SMTD Teaching Excellence Award (2020), the Southern Association of Dance Masters Honorary Lifetime Membership (2022), and the North Campus Dean's MLK Spirit Award for Institutional Change and Advocacy (2024). Colleagues described her as someone whose work "circles back and is essential to the success of the department" — a fitting tribute to a career defined by artistic excellence, pedagogical generosity, and unwavering dedication.

As we mourn the loss of our beloved colleague, we extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, colleagues, and students.

Requested by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. X. King", written in a cursive style.

Jon Kinsey

Vice President and Secretary of the University

July 2026