

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PAUL TAYLOR, LEGENDARY CHOREOGRAPHER,
HAS DIED AT 88**

NEW YORK, August 30, 2018 – The Paul Taylor Dance Foundation announced the death yesterday of legendary choreographer Paul Taylor in Manhattan on August 29.

Mr. Taylor, a founder and towering icon of America's homegrown art of modern dance, was at the forefront of the art for decades, and his ideas continue to influence art of the 21st century. During a 64-year career, Mr. Taylor created 147 dances including such masterworks as *Aureole*, *Esplanade*, *Company B*, *Promethean Fire* and *Beloved Renegade*. Mr. Taylor's final work, *Concertiana*, premiered March 2018.

In 2014 Mr. Taylor established an institutional home for the art form: Paul Taylor American Modern Dance. He curated and presented great modern dances of the past and present alongside his own works at Lincoln Center, and commissioned a new generation of choreographers so that modern dance flourishes long into the future.

Taylor dancer Michael Novak, whom Mr. Taylor named Artistic Director Designate earlier this year, becomes the second Artistic Director in the Company's 64-year history.

"Paul Taylor was one of the world's greatest dancemakers, and his passing deeply saddens not only those of us who worked with him, but also people all over the world whose spirits have been touched by his incomparable art," said Artistic Director Michael Novak. "We are grateful for your love and support as we begin to carry on his legacy with the utmost fidelity and devotion."

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“We are heartbroken by the loss of this brilliant man we loved so much and we are inspired to carry on his vision through Paul Taylor American Modern Dance,” said Executive Director John Tomlinson. “Paul planned aggressively for the future to ensure that generations to come can see his genius works along with other masterworks of modern dance, and great works that will be made by the next generation of modern choreographers.”

“The Trustees of the Paul Taylor Dance Foundation mourn the death of our leader, Paul Taylor,” said Taylor Foundation Chairman C. F. Stone III. “It has been an extraordinary honor to support Paul’s artistry and help bring his dances to every part of the globe.”

Images and video available upon request.

PAUL TAYLOR OBITUARY

Dancemaker Paul Taylor, one of the seminal artists of the 20th and 21st Centuries and a founder of America’s home-grown art of modern dance, died yesterday in Manhattan. He was 88.

Beginning in 1954, Mr. Taylor made 147 dances in all, many of which have attained iconic status and are performed by the Paul Taylor Dance Company and Taylor 2 as well as dance companies around the world. His works covered a breathtaking range of topics, but recurring themes include life and death; the natural world and man’s place within it; love and sexuality in all gender combinations; and iconic moments in American history. His poignant looks at soldiers, those who send them into battle, and those they leave behind prompted *The New York Times* to hail him as “among the great war poets.” While some of his dances are considered “dark” and others “light,” the majority of his works are dualistic, mixing elements of both extremes. His early work was largely iconoclastic, yet he went on to make some of the most romantic, athletic and funniest dances ever put on stage.

Mr. Taylor continued to choreograph and shape the art of modern dance up until his death. In 2014 he established an institutional home for the art form: Paul Taylor American Modern Dance. He curated and presented great modern dances of the past and present alongside his own works at Lincoln Center, and commissioned a new generation of choreographers so that modern dance flourishes long into the future.

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Paul Taylor was born on July 29, 1930 and grew up in and around Washington, DC. He attended Syracuse University on a swimming scholarship in the late 1940s until he discovered dance through books at the University library, and then transferred to The Juilliard School. In 1954 he assembled a small company of dancers and began to choreograph. A commanding performer despite his late start in dance, he joined the Martha Graham Dance Company in 1955 for the first of seven seasons as soloist while continuing to choreograph on his own troupe. In 1959 he was invited to be a guest artist with New York City Ballet, where George Balanchine created the “Episodes” solo for him.

Mr. Taylor first gained notoriety as a dance maker in 1957 with “Seven New Dances”; its study in non-movement famously earned it a blank newspaper review, and Graham subsequently dubbed him the “naughty boy” of dance. In 1962, with his first major success – the sunny “Aureole” – he set his trailblazing modern movement not to a contemporary score but to music composed 200 years earlier, and then went to the opposite extreme a year later with a view of purgatory in “Scudorama.” He inflamed the establishment in 1965 by lampooning some of America’s most treasured icons in “From Sea To Shining Sea,” and created more controversy in 1970 by putting incest center stage in “Big Bertha.” After retiring as a performer in 1974, he created an instant classic, the exuberant “Esplanade” (1975), which is regarded by many as his signature work. A flood of highly regarded dances followed, including “Cloven Kingdom” (1976); *Le Sacre du Printemps* (The Rehearsal) (1980); *Arden Court* (1981); “Sunset” (1983); “Last Look” (1985); “Musical Offering” (1986); “Speaking In Tongues” and “Brandenburgs” (1988); “Company B” (1991); “Piazzolla Caldera” and “Eventide” (1997); “Black Tuesday” (2001); “Promethean Fire” (2002); “Banquet of Vultures” (2005); and “Beloved Renegade” (2008). His final work was “Concertiana,” that premiered March 2018.

Mr. Taylor influenced dozens of men and women who went on to choreograph including Pina Bausch, Patrick Corbin, Laura Dean, Senta Driver, Danny Ezralow, Danny Grossman, David Parsons, Twyla Tharp, Doug Wright, Lila York and others. Many more of his dancers went on to become respected teachers at colleges and universities. He worked closely with such outstanding artists as Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Ellsworth Kelly, William Ivey Long, Santo Loquasto, Gene Moore, Tharon Musser, Robert Rauschenberg, John Rawlings, Thomas Skelton and Jennifer Tipton.

Mr. Taylor was the subject of Matthew Diamond’s Oscar-nominated documentary, “Dancemaker,” and “Creative Domain,” about the making of “Three Dubious Memories.” His autobiography, *Private Domain*, was nominated by the National Book Critics Circle as the most distinguished biography of 1987. A collection of his essays, *Facts and Fancies*, was published in 2013. In 1992 he was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors and received an Emmy Award for *Speaking in Tongues*, produced by WNET/New York the previous year. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Clinton in 1993. In 1995 he received the Algur H. Meadows Award for Excellence in the Arts and was named one of 50 prominent Americans honored in recognition of their outstanding achievement by the Library of Congress’s Office of Scholarly Programs. He was the recipient of three Guggenheim Fellowships and honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degrees from California Institute of the Arts, Connecticut College, Duke University, The Juilliard School, Skidmore College, the State University of New York at Purchase, Syracuse University and Adelphi University. Awards for lifetime achievement included a MacArthur

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Foundation Fellowship and the Samuel H. Scripps American Dance Festival Award. Other awards included the New York State Governor's Arts Award and the New York City Mayor's Award of Honor for Art and Culture. In 1989 Mr. Taylor was elected one of ten honorary members of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Having been elected to knighthood by the French government as *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* in 1969 and elevated to *Officier* in 1984 and *Commandeur* in 1990, Mr. Taylor was awarded France's highest honor, the *Légion d'Honneur*, in 2000 for exceptional contributions to French culture.

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