

Salt Lake County

On behalf of the people of Salt Lake County, the Salt Lake County Mayor, and Salt Lake County Council, we offer the following recognition and deep appreciation of the cultural contributions Joan J. Woodbury made to our County, the State of Utah, and the Nation.

Whereas, Joan was born in Cedar City, Utah, and having graduated from the Branch Agricultural College (now Southern Utah University) where she first became a student of dance, she continued her education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she went on to earn her BS and MS degrees in Dance; and

Whereas, Joan also studied under notable dance instructors and professionals including Louise Kloeppe, La Veve Whetten, Margret H'Doubler and, the most influential of all on Joan's career, the visionary dancer, philosopher, and avant-garde choreographer, Alwin Nikolais; and

Whereas, in 1951, Joan was appointed to serve as the University of Utah's first full time dance instructor and, in the following year, married Charles E. Woodbury and met her long-time collaborator and kindred spirit, Shirley R. Ririe, who together formed their first dance company, Choreodancers; and

Whereas, in 1955, Joan received the first Fulbright Scholarship ever awarded in dance, which took her to Berlin, Germany, where she studied dance prior to returning to the United States the following year to resume teaching dance at the University of Utah; and

Whereas, in 1964, Joan and her artistic partner and fellow instructor at the University, Shirley R. Ririe, formed the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company which continues today celebrating its 60th anniversary; and

Whereas, the emergence of the professional dance companies of Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company, Ballet West, and the Repertory Dance Theatre brought national recognition to Utah's dance scene in the '60s; and

Whereas, Joan J. Woodbury committed her life to teaching others that dance and the arts are for everyone and that expressions of self through movement and dance brings one to a greater understanding of life itself; and, with unbridled passion, Joan J. Woodbury touched countless lives with her devotion to her art and her ability to share that love.

Now, therefore, the Mayor and the Salt Lake County Council in recognition and appreciation for the remarkable positive impact and enrichment that Joan J. Woodbury has had on our lives and institutions, do hereby proclaim April 7, 2024, as a day to honor Joan J. Woodbury and her contributions to our community and culture.

Jennifer Wilson
Mayor

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At-Large A, Chair

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At-Large B

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