

IN THE COUNTY LEGISLATURE OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

A RESOLUTION recognizing Joshua Bodden and Whitney Huell, African American members of the Kansas City Ballet Company, for their contributions to performing arts.

RESOLUTION NO. 21549, February 19, 2024

INTRODUCED BY Venessa Huskey, Jeanie Lauer, Megan L. Marshall, Jalen Anderson, Donna Peyton, Manuel Abarca IV, Charlie Franklin, DaRon McGee, Sean E. Smith, County Legislators

WHEREAS, Black History Month celebrates the contributions of African Americans to various realms of cultural expression, including the arts; and,

WHEREAS, the theme of this year's Black History Month, "African Americans and the Arts," serves to highlight the influence that African Americans have wielded in shaping the landscape of visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, cuisine, and other forms of cultural expression; and,

WHEREAS, within the realm of performing arts, Joshua Bodden and Whitney Huell stand as shining examples of African American excellence and artistry, elevating the Kansas City Ballet Company through their remarkable talents, dedication, and accomplishments; and,

WHEREAS, Joshua Bodden embarked on his ballet journey at the age of 10 at the prestigious Miami City Ballet School at the direction of Edward and Linda Villella, refining his skills at The Harid Conservatory and Pittsburgh Ballet Theater's year-round program on a full scholarship, and honing his craft through summer intensives at the School of American Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and North Carolina School of the Arts; and,

WHEREAS, Mr. Bodden's career has seen him grace the stages of renowned companies such as Miami City Ballet, Dance Theatre of Harlem's Ensemble, and Cincinnati Ballet, where he earned the distinction of being the first African American male to perform the role of a ballet boy in Twyla Tharp's "In the Upper Room," before joining the Kansas City Ballet in 2014, where he has since mesmerized audiences with his exceptional portrayals of diverse roles in iconic ballet productions; and,

WHEREAS, Whitney Huell, a consummate artist in her own right, received her early training at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities under the mentorship of Stanislav Issaev and Robert Barnett, followed by earning a bachelor of science in Ballet and Psychology at Indiana University, before embarking on a stellar career that has seen her shine on the stages of Ballet West and the Kansas City Ballet, where she has distinguished herself through her captivating performances in a wide array of ballet repertoire, embodying grace, strength, and artistry; and,

WHEREAS, Ms. Huell's historic portrayal as the Sugar Plum Fairy in Devon Carney's production of "The Nutcracker" in 2018 marked a significant milestone in the annals of the Kansas City Ballet, as she became the first African American in the Kansas City Ballet history to embody this iconic role, thereby inspiring future generations of dancers and breaking barriers in the world of ballet; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the County Legislature of Jackson County, Missouri that the Legislature hereby extends its deepest appreciation and commendation to Joshua Bodden and Whitney Huell for their outstanding achievements, exemplary leadership, and

enduring contributions to the Kansas City Ballet Company and the broader arts community, serving as inspirations and role models for aspiring artists everywhere.

Effective Date: This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its passage by a majority of the Legislature.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Bryan Covinsky
Bryan Covinsky (Feb 15, 2024 10:58 CST)
County Counselor

Certificate of Passage

I hereby certify that the attached resolution, Resolution No. 21549 of February 19, 2024, was duly passed on February 19, 2024 by the Jackson County Legislature. The votes thereon were as follows:

Yeas 7

Nays 0

Abstaining 0

Absent 2

2.19.2024
Date

Mary Jo Spino
Mary Jo Spino, Clerk of Legislature