

# What does it take? Making a successful Gala

By Cynthia G. Fischer, President



**The night of the Gala, the performance is spectacular, the Ballroom is magical, and everyone is dancing. We don't think about what goes into making a perfect evening.**

Alex and staff start working the day after the Gala: setting a date, booking City Center and the hotel where the dinner and dancing will be held, checking in with sponsors to see if they will continue their support, and determining the theme. Decisions are made on ticket prices, timing of the evening, selection of honorees and design of the invitation.

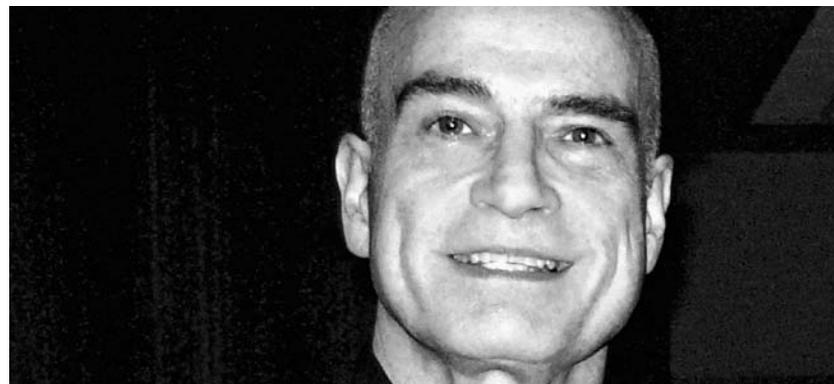
Gala Chairs are recruited; this year we had twenty. These volunteers sell tables, tickets and journal ads, bring in sponsors and in-kind donations, gather auction gifts and organize the menu, flowers and music, and cajole a professional auctioneer into donating his or her time.

The show starts to take shape months before the performance. Many, many dancers, companies and shows are contacted. Schedules are coordinated and re-coordinated. Dancers are injured or booked elsewhere and the show must be reshaped. Remember, these dancers all volunteer their time and performances. Each part is conceived and rehearsed independently. Remarkably, there is only one dress/tech rehearsal the day of the event! But as they are all professionals, they make it seem effortless and seamless.

Our 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee was in memory of Caroline and Theodore Newhouse and dedicated to Sono Osato Elmaleh and Victor Elmaleh. It's fitting that it was arguably the most exciting show and beautiful evening ever! But what really makes a great Gala? This year we raised \$1.2 million. Once expenses are paid, we will have approximately \$700,000 to pay for the vital programs, services and scholarships provided by this organization. To a donor, that means: 350 \$2,000 scholarships, or 6,364 counseling hours, or 1,022 support and focus groups, or 306 Career Conversations, or 3,070 Local Outreach Projects, or 33 National Outreach Projects. These dollars will be well used for a combination of these essential programs and services.

# Executive Director's Message Serving our organization

By Alexander J. Dubé, Executive Director



**It has been my privilege and pleasure to serve on the Career Transition For Dancers' Board of Directors as its Secretary/Treasurer from 1985 through 2001, and as its Executive Director, since 2001.**

Under the watchful and caring administration of Ann Barry, President and Executive Director from 1985 through 2001, and now the organization's Grants Administrator, I was handed a growing organization that had substantial support from the founding unions: Actors' Equity Association, American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, American Guild of Musical Artists, and Screen Actors Guild—Motion Picture Players Welfare Fund.

Taking the helm brought new challenges: first the ever-increasing need for career counseling, the necessity to raise more money to meet increasing financial support requests, and growing the staff to meet the demands of running an organization that serves dancers in 47 states.

Since it is our 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee, we must celebrate and acknowledge our Board of Directors, our presenting sponsor Rolex Watch USA, and Sono Osato Elmaleh and Victor Elmaleh for their gift of \$500,000 to enhance Sono's scholarship fund and provide a 1-to-1 challenge for donors to give. Also, we must thank numerous sponsors, honorees, patrons, friends, volunteers and a dedicated staff that makes our annual gala a success. A special thank you to Michele and Lawrence Herbert for opening their home to the organization for our Pre-Gala reception. We will never just settle to meet our mission—but constantly strive to exceed it. Without your support and compassionate concern for the well-being of dancers nationwide, we could not survive and our dancer-clients would be without help during the most vulnerable stage of their lives.

Taking a far-sighted view into our future, I see a continued expansion of programs and services plus many more scholarships being awarded. Make no mistake—the future of our organization is in your caring, loving hands. We are so grateful that each and every one of you is a valued, cherished member of the Career Transition For Dancers' Family.

1. **The Last Mambo** (Photo: Richard Termine)
2. **42nd Street** (Photo: Richard Termine)
3. **Cynthia G. Fischer and Ann Barry** (Photo: Jerry Ruotolo)
4. **Carmen Diana Barth and Andrew & Avery Barth** (Photo: Richard Termine)
5. **Edward Villella and Twyla Tharp** (Photo: Richard Termine)
6. **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** (Photo: Richard Termine)
7. **Roberta Silbert, Janice Becker, Michele Herbert, Ann Van Ness, Anka K. Palitz, Heléne Alexopoulos Warrick and Michele Riggi** (Photo: Jerry Ruotolo)
8. **James Odom, Maureen Donnelly, Mary Lou Westerfield, and Terry Walker** (Photo: Jerry Ruotolo)
9. **Anthony Giacoio and Trisha Brown** (Photo: Jerry Ruotolo)
10. **National Dance Institute** (Photo: Richard Termine)
11. **Emily & Jill Adler, Amy Bermant Adler, Sculptor Peter Rubino and Elliott Adler** (Photo: Jerry Ruotolo)
12. **Curtain call** (Photo: Richard Termine)
13. **The Joffrey Ballet** (Photo: Richard Termine)