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**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHOREOGRAPHY-AKRON  
WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS**



Left to right: Dacquiri Baptiste (photo Daven Baptiste), Christy Bolingbroke (photo Andrew Weeks), Meg Booth (photo Claire McAdams), and DeMarcus Akeem Suggs (photo Amber N Ford)

AKRON, Ohio (October 25, 2022) — **The National Center for Choreography - Akron (NCCAkron)** has voted in new members to its board of directors: **Dacquiri Baptiste** (Memphis, TN), **Meg Booth** (Houston, TX), and **DeMarcus Akeem Suggs** (Minneapolis, MN).

Founded in 2015, the National Center for Choreography - Akron supports the research and development of new work in dance by exploring the full potential of the creative process. In addition to offering studio and technical residencies to make new work, activities focus on catalyzing dialogue and experimentation; creating proximity among artists and dance thinkers; and aggregating resources around dance making. In addition to governance, the NCCAkron board of directors mimics the organization's work as a think tank for dance and the future of the field.

NCCAkron Executive/Artistic Director **Christy Bolingbroke** (Akron, OH) was also confirmed as a voting member of the board, having previously served in an ex officio role. The new members will join board chair and JMS & Co Founder/Principal **John Michael Schert** (Boise, ID), Ballet Hispánico Artistic Director & CEO **Eduardo Vilaro** (New York, NY), The University of Akron Associate Dean **Dr. Ann Usher** (Medina, OH), Manchester Partners Managing Director **Mark Williams** (Solon, OH), and Bober Markey Federovich Partner **John Jenkins** (Cuyahoga Falls, OH).

“With the addition of these four stellar board members, the National Center for Choreography - Akron progresses in its vision of serving the national cohort of choreographers and dance-makers,” commented John Michael Schert. “These new members bring a breadth of experience, insight, and wisdom that will enable the NCCAkron board to work as a ‘think tank’ for the field, addressing systemic issues that have hindered the artists we serve.”

### **New NCCAkron Board Member Bios**

**Dacquiri Baptiste** has worked in non profit arts for over 21 years. She worked at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for 19 years. She worked in various roles within the company, starting as Merchandise Manager in 2000, transitioning to Company Manager for 10 years, and finally assuming the role of Director of Production in 2014. June 2019, Dacquiri became the Vice President and Chief Operations Officer for the Orpheum Theatre Group in Memphis, TN. Dacquiri is responsible for managing all operational aspects of the theater and aligning them with growth and expansion. This includes developing and implementing strategies for theater operations, ensuring the safety and well-being of performers, staff, and volunteers, and negotiating contracts with partners to make sure financial goals are met. Dacquiri is currently a Fellow for both the LACNA BIPOC Executive Leadership program and the Broadway League. She and her husband Daven reside in Memphis, TN with their 2 children, Denver (7) and Duke(5). Dacquiri enjoys traveling and spending time with family. Dacquiri is passionate about reminding people that the arts are a fundamental part of life not an extra. She understands the importance of arts accessibility and the need for industry-shifting arts leaders such as herself.

As the Founding Executive/Artistic Director for the National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron (NCCAkron), **Christy Bolingbroke** is responsible for setting the curatorial vision and sustainable business model to foster research and development in dance. Previously, she served as the Deputy Director for Advancement at ODC in San Francisco, overseeing curation and performance programming as well as marketing and development organization-wide. A key aspect of her position included managing a unique three-year artist-in-residence program for dance artists, guiding and advising them in all aspects of creative development and administration. Prior to ODC, she was the Director of Marketing at the Mark Morris Dance Group in Brooklyn, NY. She earned a B.A. in Dance from the University of California, Los Angeles; an M.A. in Performance Curation from Wesleyan University; and is a graduate of the Arts Management Fellowship program at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She currently serves on the Akron Civic Commons Core Team; as a consulting advisor for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Arts Innovation Management initiative; and on the New England Foundation for the Arts National Dance Project Advisory Panel. In 2017, *Dance Magazine* named Bolingbroke among the national list of most influential people in dance today.

**Meg Booth** is President and CEO for Performing Arts Houston, in Houston, Texas, leading strategic initiatives, program curation, and overall stewardship and management of the multi-disciplinary presenting and arts education organization. Since being named to the role in December 2018, Meg has led the completion of a strategic planning process, launched New/Now: The Houston Artist Commissioning Project, led a rebranding and renaming of the

organization, and continues to build on the organization's 56-year history of bringing internationally acclaimed, diverse, and relevant artists to Houston. Prior to joining Performing Arts Houston, Meg directed and curated the John F. Kennedy Center's ballet and contemporary dance series in Washington D.C. and served as Director of The Suzanne Farrell Ballet. She also served as General Manager of Twyla Tharp Dance, and Company Manager of White Oak Dance Project under the Direction of Mikhail Baryshnikov. She holds a BFA from the University of Notre Dame and is an alumna of Kennedy Center's Arts Management Fellowship Program.

Fueled by a passion to cultivate and sustain a vibrant, equitable, accessible, and people-centric arts ecosystem, **DeMarcus Akeem Suggs** is an arts advocate and cultural worker with over a decade of professional experience in the sector. A graduate of Belhaven University (BFA in Dance) and The University of Akron (MA in Arts Administration), DeMarcus currently serves as the Director of Development for Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA), the nation's first regional arts organization serving the heartland states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. Before joining M-AAA, DeMarcus served as Development Director at Alternate ROOTS, Director of Education & Outreach at Neos Dance Theatre, Education & Engagement Coordinator for Victoria Theatre Association (Dayton Live), as well as Graduate Assistant for The National Center for Choreography at the University of Akron (NCCAkron). He's proud to continue his support of NCCAkron's important work while serving on the Board of Directors.

### **About NCCAkron**

The National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron supports the research and development of new work in dance by exploring the full potential of the creative process. In addition to offering studio and technical residencies to make new work, activities focus on catalyzing dialogue and experimentation; creating proximity among artists and dance thinkers; and aggregating resources around dance making. For more information, visit [nccakron.org](http://nccakron.org).

The establishment and general operation of NCCAkron is made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

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