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SPRING DANCE THEATER



PHOTO BY JORDAN KUBAT

Gladys Kares with Brandy Factory and Robbi Lundegard, two of the dancers in her final Spring Dance Theater.



PHOTO BY LEONARD ORTIZ, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/SCNG

Gladys Kares, dancer, choreographer and dance professor, will retire at the end of the semester. In her previous career she danced with the Gloria Newman Dance Theater, below.



PHOTO COURTESY DEBRA NOBLE

INSPIRING DANCERS FOR DECADES

Leaving a legacy, Gladys Kares will take her last curtain call

By Susan Gill Vardon
sgvardon@scng.com

The Spring Dance Theater opens today to showcase engaging and thought-provoking choreography and dance by Cal State Fullerton students and faculty and guest artists.

One thing is different about this production, however. The show is the last to be coordinated by the woman whose vision, love of dance and passion for her students has molded the spring and fall dance theaters into highly anticipated annual events.

Gladys Kares, a dance professor at Cal State Fullerton for 41 years, is retiring at the end of the semester. She was hired as a ballet teacher when dance was just an emphasis of the Theatre Depart-

ment and not even its own major. Over the years she has guided the growth of the Dance Department, mentored students in choreography and dance and has seen her students go to Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. five times.

"She is one-of-a-kind brilliant, generous humble and funny — a woman of integrity," said Debra Noble, vice chair of the Dance Department. "I always wonder how such a big heart fits in such a little, petite person."

Kares' retirement will leave a big hole in the department, Noble said. "What a legacy she has — the giving of herself," she said. "It's her passion. She just channels her own being into our programs."

Walking through the performing arts building on a recent afternoon, Kares reflected on why it was

"I always wonder how such a big heart fits in such a little, petite person."

Debra Noble

"Professor Kares' greatest gift is her passion to help young dancers — she has been the heart and soul of the CSUF Dance Program during her tenure."

Dale Merrill

time to leave a place she has cherished and helped shape. Over the years she has taught ballet, modern dance, choreography and other classes, and has overseen the fall and spring dance theaters for over three decades.

Five years ago a feeling washed over her that it was time to leave the program to the "young kids," she recalled.

Kares didn't listen. The students — as always — kept her there.

"Everybody says the students here somehow don't have that sense of entitlement, they are not cliquish," Kares said. "They are just really hardworking."

She had the same thoughts about leaving again this semester and decided to listen.

"It's my age," said Kares, 69, with

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