

# THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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## Kares

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a laugh. "It's not as easy to jump anymore."

Kares was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and found her love of dance there.

Her parents had moved to South Africa from Prague after World War II. Her father, Frank Kares, was a survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp and her mother, Emma, was a Catholic who was part of the Resistance.

The two met and found an organization that helped Jews get out of Europe — to South Africa, Australia, Israel or Argentina. They chose South Africa.

Kares started ballet classes when she was about 5.

"I loved the physicality of it," she said. "It felt good to do and to get lost in. It was something I could work on and achieve."

When she was 8, a teacher who suffered from migraines asked her to take over a class of youngsters.

"I had such a ball teaching it and that's when I knew I wanted to be a teacher," she said.

Disgusted by apartheid in South Africa, Kares' father eventually decided to move the family to San Francisco.

Sixteen at the time, Kares remembers thinking that the cold, foggy climate was not ideal for a dancer.

She left San Francisco to attend UCLA, where she got a bachelor's and a master's degree in dance. In 1973 she joined the Gloria Newman Dance Theater as a major performing artist, later becoming the group's assistant director.

Hired as a ballet teacher at Cal State Fullerton, it wasn't long before she was also teaching modern dance, jazz dance and choreography. She hired a friend, Barbara Arms, who was in the corps of the Ballet Russe, to teach ballet, and the two of them collaborated to build the department.

In 1982, CSUF got national accreditation for a dance major. "It was such a victory," Kares said, adding that the department chair and dean had been supportive of the effort.



PHOTO BY LEONARD ORTIZ, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/SCNG

Gladys Kares danced with the Gloria Newman Dance Theater, below, before being hired to teach ballet at Cal State Fullerton.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBRA NOBLE

Among the other highlights in her career was seeing her students take their talents to the Kennedy Center.

"Cal State Who? They used to say," Kares recalled. "Where did you guys spring from? It was such a surprise."

For 41 years she has shared her love of dance with her students.

"The cliché is I love to dance but it is a love," she said. "They say that the red earth of Africa gets under your skin and you love Africa. I think it is the same with dance. It gets into your soul, your heart, your body."

This year's spring production features two guest artists, three faculty members, including College of Arts Dean Dale Merrill, and three students.

"Gladys Kares is a force to be reckoned with here at CSUF," Merrill said. "For over 40 years she has inspired, mentored and pushed young dancers and choreographers to reach beyond what they thought was possible."

"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. Her presence will be missed."

Emily Ploense, who has worked with Kares in several classes and was mentored by her in choreographing pieces for past dance theaters, agreed.

"In terms of choreography, just the notes she gives make you think of choreographing in a different way or seeing things you didn't

see beforehand in terms of creating it or making your vision more clear," said Ploense, who is graduating in May with double majors — dance and liberal studies.

"You need to get your point across to be a successful choreographer, and she has a great way of helping."

Noble said the department has found a way to honor Kares during the run of the spring concert.

They will have an exhibit of photographs from spring and fall concerts coordinated by Kares over the years in the lobby of the Little Theatre, where the production is being held. The photos were taken by Ben Licera, whose daughter Kristy Licera was a student in the dance program.

"We can celebrate all the moments of beauty that she has brought to us," Noble said.

As for retirement, Kares is ready to "do anything I want to do." She just bought a condo in Tustin and is ready to do volunteer work and travel. It's time to leave it to the "young kids" to grow and nurture the department she loves.

"Forty-one years is a long time," she said. "But it really has flown by."

The Spring Dance Theater, featuring choreography focusing on personal struggles, religion and youth and coordinated by Gladys Kares, runs through May 12 in the Little Theatre. Cost is \$12-\$14.

## Dreamers

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Arrivals) was rescinded ... but having a space like the TDRC definitely allowed me to thrive and survive."

The festivities continued at the Becker Amphitheater, featuring booth activities; thoughts about the undocumented experience from graduate student Jose Flores and special guest Yosimar Reyes — a queer undocumented immigrant, poet and activist and recognition of the center's vision committee.

Also at the event was the launch of the new Undocumented and Ally Faculty & Staff Association founded by Tonantzin Oseguera, associate vice president for student affairs; Raymund Aguirre, chief of university police; and Xiaopan Xue, coordinator in student life and leadership.

CSUF's association — for faculty and staff who are currently or formerly undocumented — is the first such association in the state.

"The association's main goal is to create a sense of community and support for faculty and staff

who identify this way," Xue said. "As undocumented individuals leave the realm of higher education, there is often much less support in society."

"This group will give individuals a continued safe space and village of support to share highs, lows and the unique experience that comes with being undocumented."

The founders decided to come together and be open about their experiences, said Oseguera, who came to the U.S. from Mexico City when she was 13. She was undocumented as she went through most of high school and college, she said, and received her citizenship in 2005.

"We decided we had to have a community not just to be with each other but to be a role model," she said. "Our students have come out of the shadows — undocumented and unafraid."

"They are putting themselves out there and we want them to know that there are faculty members who have had the same experiences — and some of us have come out the other side. There is hope."

For information, visit [www.fullerton.edu/tdrc](http://www.fullerton.edu/tdrc)



PHOTO COURTESY CAL STATE FULLERTON

Graduate student Jose Flores shares his experiences at CSUF before and after the TDRC's opening.