

Diane McNeal Hunt

Dancer

Director and Master Teaching Artist – AZ Wolf Trap



Diane McNeal Hunt, director of Arizona Wolf Trap, is recognized as a leading dance artist and educator by the Arizona and Southwest dance communities. Graduating with a bachelor of arts in education and dance from Arizona State University in 1980, Diane launched into a rich career that includes performing, teaching, and choreographing throughout the Valley of the Sun.

A passionate teaching artist with 40 years of professional experience, Diane enjoys designing and conducting residencies, teaching masterclasses, choreographing, and performing for all ages in Arizona's schools and community programs. Her modern-contemporary dance teaching style shares theories and concepts from strong influences in her training background that include studies with Bill Evans and focused training in the techniques of Martha Graham, Nikolais /Louis, Paul Taylor, and Merce Cunningham.

Recognized since 1986 as “Dancing Diane” throughout Head Start and early childhood classrooms, she is a master teaching artist for Arizona Wolf Trap Early Learning Through the Arts. This national-level program positions Diane to model integration of performing arts with curriculum. She leads professional development workshops that connect teachers to the arts integration residency work experienced by the children. Also,

since 1986, “Dancing Diane” has taught the joys of dance to students from kindergarten through 4th grade as a dance faculty member at Desert View Learning Center. Diane’s teaching approach includes attention to STEM Arts Learning and Arizona standards for academic subjects and art room.

Diane and her husband and dance partner, Mark Vanek, founded MarDi Duet Dance Company in 1983. Their performing and teaching took them throughout Arizona and Mexico. Some of their signature works featured the masks of international artist Zarco Guerrero. Through their collaborations with Zarco, MarDi became a featured presence as “Las Calacas Encantadas” (“The Enchanted Skeletons”) in Dia de los Muertos Festivals throughout Arizona.

She is the founding artistic director of ELEVATE DanceWorks. Her company and choreography is selected to performed locally and nationally at Harvest Chicago Contemporary Dance Festival, Las Vegas Dance in the Desert Festival, MixMatch Dance Festival, ODC-San Francisco, San Francisco Movement Arts Festival, Temecula Breaking Ground/Tiny Dances, and BETA Dance Festival (Arizona) as associate artistic director for Center Dance Ensemble. Diane’s choreography for CDE was featured at the Herberger Theater Center in downtown Phoenix. In addition to dancing for CDE, original roles have been created on Diane as a performer with A Ludwig Dance Theatre since 1986, and she was a founding company member of Desert Dance Theatre in 1980. Her choreography is also commissioned by Kaleidoscope Dance Company, Dulce Dance Company, Nicole Olson & Dancers, InSpiritus Dance Company, Chandler-Gilbert Community College, Scottsdale Community College, and Convergence Ballet Company.

Diane and Mark shared in the love and light of raising two wonderful sons and becoming grandparents. Family is at the core of joy in their lives!

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