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## **Ballet Arizona Welcomes New Philanthropy Director** *J. David Smith Joins Leadership to Support Ballet Arizona's Next Chapter*

**PHOENIX** – [Ballet Arizona](#), the Valley's only professional ballet company, is thrilled to announce the hire of its new philanthropy director, J. David Smith.

Smith joins Ballet Arizona with a distinguished background in nonprofit leadership, fundraising, and donor engagement. Most recently, he served as chief development officer for Habitat for Humanity Central Arizona. His extensive experience building meaningful donor relationships and advancing philanthropic initiatives makes him a valuable addition to Ballet Arizona's team.

"David's passion for the arts, combined with his proven track record in philanthropy and community engagement, make him an exceptional fit for Ballet Arizona," said Jami Kozemczak, executive director of Ballet Arizona. "His experience and dedication to connecting donors with meaningful causes will play an important role in advancing our mission and supporting the future of ballet in Arizona."

Before transitioning into nonprofit leadership, Smith spent nearly two decades in retail banking, serving in leadership roles across metro Phoenix. His career included positions in branch management, quality assurance, information technology, and learning and development. His expertise later expanded beyond Arizona through consulting work with financial institutions in Missouri, Minnesota, and Illinois before returning to the Valley.

Smith subsequently spent nearly ten years as the general manager of a commercial print shop, further strengthening his leadership and operational expertise. Throughout his corporate and small business career, however, his passion for nonprofit service remained constant. He served on the boards of several local nonprofit organizations and volunteered extensively, including chairing numerous fundraising and gala committees.

Describing his move into philanthropy as his "third and favorite professional chapter," Smith has held development leadership roles across the human services, animal welfare, and nonprofit sectors. Throughout his career, he has been driven by a commitment to building authentic relationships and helping donors align their philanthropic goals with causes that inspire them.

A Valley native, Smith's connection to the arts began at an early age. His mother performed as a violinist with The Phoenix Symphony for nearly three decades, introducing him to Arizona's vibrant arts community at a formative time. Since then, he has remained a devoted supporter of the arts, regularly attending performances by the symphony, opera, and ballet.

"I am honored to join Ballet Arizona and support an organization that enriches our community through the power of dance," said Smith. "As a lifelong supporter of the arts, I look forward to connecting with donors and partners who share a passion for ensuring Ballet Arizona continues to thrive for generations to come."

As the philanthropy director, Smith will lead Ballet Arizona's fundraising efforts, cultivate donor relationships, and help advance the organization's mission of inspiring, educating, and enriching lives through the art of dance.

Ballet Arizona is the premier ballet company of the State of Arizona, whose mission is to create, perform, and teach outstanding classical and contemporary ballet. This institution is dedicated to preserving and celebrating classical dance while creating and commissioning new innovative works. To learn more about Ballet Arizona as it celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary season, visit [balletaz.org/](http://balletaz.org/).

**Ballet Arizona**

Since 1986, Ballet Arizona has been dedicated to preserving the tradition of classical ballet while advancing the art form through innovative performances and new works. Led artistically by internationally acclaimed choreographer Daniela Cardim, Ballet Arizona continues to inspire audiences with dynamic performances that honor ballet's rich heritage while embracing the future of dance. During its 40th season, the company will present "Romeo & Juliet," "The Nutcracker," "Don Quixote," "Pulse," and "Desert Lines." Under the executive leadership of Jami Kozemczak, the company has grown into one of the nation's leading regional ballet companies and a premier cultural institution in the Southwest, recognized for its artistic excellence, financial strength, and community impact. The School of Ballet Arizona, under the direction of James Payne, is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of dancers of all ages and skill levels with world-renowned instruction. Ballet Arizona's Community Engagement programs also help extend the organization's reach through feed and low-cost community programs that serve more than 26,000 children and families each year. For more information, visit [balletaz.org](http://balletaz.org/).

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