



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Local Dance School and Memphis Public Libraries to Host Month-long Black History Celebration Honoring African-American Ballerinas**

**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** – Community-based ballet school and youth dance company, Ballet On Wheels Dance School and Company and the Memphis Public Library & Information Center (MPLIC) are collaborating to host a Black History event celebrating and honoring the history of African-American ballerinas called “**Groundbreakers: African-American Ballerina Stories of Triumph and Struggles.**”

The month-long celebration will begin with the **Exhibit Opening & Reception** on **Thursday, February 2, 2017, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** at **Goodwyn Gallery** inside the **Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library** (3030 Poplar Ave.). The exhibit will include photos of African-American ballerinas including “History Firsts” and historical performance materials by Ballet On Wheels.

On **Thursday, February 9** at **6 p.m.**, we will have a screening for the 12-minute documentary, **First African-American Ballerinas** in Central Library’s meeting rooms (first floor).

On **Saturday, February 18** at **1 p.m.**, we will have our **Read, Write, & Move** event, which will include an interpretive performance by the Ballet On Wheels Dance Company through informative, Black History storytelling.

The celebration will conclude with a performance by the Ballet On Wheels Dance Company in the Goodwyn Gallery on **Saturday, February 25** at **11 a.m.** All events are free and open to the public.

“We are thrilled to partner with the City of Memphis on this wonderful event to educate young ladies and aspiring dancers about the history of African-American ballerinas,” said Chauniece Thompson, executive artistic director of Ballet On Wheels.

“We all know about Misty Copeland and her outstanding achievements in breaking barriers in ballet. But, you have talented women such as Olivia Boisson, Jasmine Perry, Dara Holmes and many others who are trailblazers in African-American ballet.”

For more information about this Black History Month celebration, visit [www.balletonwheels.org](http://www.balletonwheels.org) and [www.memphislibrary.org](http://www.memphislibrary.org).

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**About Ballet On Wheels Dance School & Company:**

Ballet On Wheels Dance School & Company is a non-profit, community-based classical ballet school and youth dance company. Students learn the fundamentals of dance while developing qualities that make for a successful and happy life: self-discipline, perseverance, creativity and more. Our mission statement and goal is to develop and define art education and appreciation of classical ballet and other dance genres, through self-discipline, creative expression and performance exposure, in young people of diverse backgrounds. For more information on Ballet On Wheels Dance School & Company, visit [www.balletonwheels.org](http://www.balletonwheels.org).

**About Memphis Public Library & Information Center (MPLIC):**

The Memphis Public Library & Information Center (MPLIC) is committed to satisfying the customer's need to know. With 18 Library locations throughout the Greater Memphis area, MPLIC offers an array of programs, services, and resources for citizens and visitors to enjoy. They include JobLINC mobile career services, LINC/2-1-1 telephone referral services, a TV and radio station (WYPL TV-18, WYPL FM 89.3), a small business center, laptops for checkout and free Wi-Fi access, in addition to books, e-books, DVDs, records, compact discs, and educational programs for children, teens, and adults. Customers can find age-appropriate services and a list of Library locations at [www.memphislibrary.org](http://www.memphislibrary.org).

Memphis Public Libraries are publicly and privately funded. Approximately three million people visit the Memphis Public Library & Information Center each year.

**About The City of Memphis:**

Memphis is the largest city in Tennessee and a major cultural center for the Southeastern United States. It has a metropolitan population of more than one million. For more information about the City, visit [www.memphistn.gov](http://www.memphistn.gov).