

1                   **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE 75TH**  
2                   **ANNIVERSARY OF TANNER DANCE UTAH**

3                                   2024 GENERAL SESSION

4                                   STATE OF UTAH

5                                   **Chief Sponsor: Jennifer Dailey-Provost**

6                                   Senate Sponsor: Jen Plumb

---

---

8                   **LONG TITLE**

9                   **General Description:**

10                   This resolution recognizes the 75th anniversary of University of Utah's Tanner Dance  
11                   and honors Virginia Tanner's continued legacy and the legacy of the Tanner Dance  
12                   faculty and staff.

13                   **Highlighted Provisions:**

- 14                   This resolution:
- 15                   ▶ recognizes the 75th anniversary of Tanner Dance;
  - 16                   ▶ honors Virginia Tanner's continued legacy of inclusivity, creativity, and excellence  
17                   in teaching young arts;
  - 18                   ▶ recognizes the remarkable leadership and growth over 75 years to currently serving  
19                   8,000 students weekly and reaching 40,000 Utahns annually; and
  - 20                   ▶ acknowledges the generous community support allowing further enhancement of the  
21                   programs that enrich the lives of the children and adults Tanner Dance serves.

22                   **Special Clauses:**

23                   None

---

---

25                   *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

26                   WHEREAS, as the oldest children's dance company in the United States, University of  
27                   Utah Tanner Dance has brought joy and the positive influence of the arts into the lives of more



28 than one million young people;

29 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance celebrates its 75th anniversary along with the incredible  
30 legacy that Virginia Tanner began in 1949 with her unwavering commitment to fostering  
31 creativity in the lives of children;

32 WHEREAS, revered modern dance pioneer, Doris Humphrey, stated in 1949 that the  
33 "children offer a wonderful proof of the power of the young artist, guided wisely, untarnished  
34 by dogma or routine, unstereotyped, and lovely. This source of fresh ideas in dance-art is a  
35 treasure house...";

36 WHEREAS, Walter Terry, Dean of American dance critics, wrote in 1953 "From the  
37 first, there was beauty. The children were wonderfully disciplined, yet gloriously free. They  
38 dance as if they had faith in themselves, had a love of those of us who were seeing them,  
39 actively believed in their God, and rejoiced in all of these";

40 WHEREAS, Jose Limon spoke of Miss Virginia Tanner in 1978, proclaiming, "Salt  
41 Lake City is the most blessed city in the world to have the world's master children's dance  
42 teacher. There isn't any place that has anyone who can touch her genius for teaching children  
43 the exciting purity of the dancing arts.";

44 WHEREAS, Virginia Tanner's motivating force behind work is "not only developing  
45 excellent dancers, but more importantly, developing young people who are useful, imaginative,  
46 worthwhile human beings.";

47 WHEREAS, Virginia Tanner began teaching dance classes in her home in 1935, then  
48 moved to the Deseret Gym, then McCune School of Music and Art, then Temple Bowling  
49 Alley on North Temple and Main, and finally in 1961, to the University of Utah where the  
50 company was housed in a World War II barracks building;

51 WHEREAS, in 2014 the Tanner Dance program moved into its exquisite and  
52 permanent home in the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Arts Education Complex on the University  
53 of Utah campus;

54 WHEREAS, as Tanner Dance embarks on this historic 75th anniversary year, the  
55 company remains an internationally recognized leader in dance and arts education for children,  
56 steadfast in its dedication to upholding the integrity of its programming and the excellence of  
57 its leadership in artistic faculty and staff;

58 WHEREAS, more than 40 years after Tanner's death, the program, under the leadership

59 of Mary Ann Lee and her renowned faculty and staff, has grown exponentially to include not  
60 only dance but also visual art, language arts, and music, teaching artists that have been  
61 mentored in Tanner's unique teaching philosophy;

62 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance reaches approximately 40,000 students across Utah through  
63 various programs, outreach, and special performances;

64 WHEREAS, knowing that the arts play an essential role in nourishing individuals and  
65 rebuilding communities, there has never been a more important time to provide an imaginative,  
66 inclusive, and nurturing space for children and adults;

67 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance currently engages nearly 1,000 students each week in  
68 creative arts through the Fine Arts Preschool and French Immersion Preschool, the Virginia  
69 Tanner Dance Creative Dance and Studio Program, the Contemporary Companies, and the  
70 internationally renowned and second-oldest performing arts organization in Utah, the  
71 Children's Dance Theatre;

72 WHEREAS, extending Tanner Dance's reach to 7,000 scholarship students across 35  
73 schools, through Side-by-Side Teaching Residency program, professional development  
74 workshops, and distance learning, skilled faculty and dance specialists provide equitable,  
75 rigorous dance training to under-served and diverse populations in rural areas, refugee  
76 communities, ethnically diverse student groups, indigenous tribal communities, and to those  
77 with physical or cognitive disabilities;

78 WHEREAS, students develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, empathy  
79 for peers, creative expression, curricular connections and ultimately experience the  
80 transformative power of dance and the arts while infusing dance and collaborating with  
81 professional musicians into academic subjects;

82 WHEREAS, Amber Clayton, Principal at Granger and Millcreek Elementary schools  
83 stated, "Our students speak more than 32 different first languages, and more than 70% of our  
84 families qualify for free and reduced lunch. This level of arts instruction, weekly access to a  
85 professional dance instructor and live musician, is out of reach for most. Tanner brings  
86 equitable access to the arts. Then art does what it does best makes us all better human beings.";

87 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance embraces inclusivity through Adaptive Needs Dance classes  
88 for children and adults with disabilities;

89 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance nurtures cognitive needs and physical skills through the

90 Learning and Engaging through Arts Discipline and Development (LEADD) and the Elevate  
91 Theater Company programs;

92 WHEREAS, participants in Tanner Dance's programs develop confidence,  
93 communication, socialization, movement skills, and a meaningful connection to their  
94 community;

95 WHEREAS, no matter the program in which a child participates, Tanner Dance strives  
96 to help each and every one of them become compassionate and resilient individuals through  
97 memories made, skills learned, and relationships formed, inspiring them for the rest of their  
98 lives;

99 WHEREAS, students learn to understand and interact with the world around them by  
100 engaging with music, visual art, children's literature, and nature;

101 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance creates young artists that have developed communication  
102 skills, emotional intelligence, compassion, determination, and a life-long desire to move, learn,  
103 and engage;

104 WHEREAS, the professional arts experiences for junior high and high school dancers  
105 builds advanced skills in leadership and creative problem solving, helping students improve  
106 college-readiness, whether in dance or other disciplines, discover their capabilities, and engage  
107 in positive community involvement as they become young adults;

108 WHEREAS, the Tanner Dance Program at the University of Utah aligns with the  
109 university's mission of teaching, research, and service by building bridges within the  
110 community, offering professional development for arts specialists and classroom teachers;

111 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance serves as an essential arts auxiliary to the College of Fine  
112 Arts through teaching internships for college students, collaborative research projects, and  
113 degree enrichment courses in multiple departments developed and taught by Tanner Dance  
114 faculty;

115 WHEREAS, Tanner Dance remains committed to Virginia Tanner's philosophy to give  
116 students the opportunity to share their own voices through the arts, allow a more diverse  
117 population in Utah to benefit from the outstanding programs, and retain a position as an  
118 internationally-recognized innovator in arts education; and

119 WHEREAS, the continued support and partnership of organizations including the Utah  
120 State Board of Education Professional Outreach Programs in the Schools (POPS), National

121 Endowment for the Arts, Salt Lake City Arts Council, Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts and Parks  
122 (ZAP), and the Utah Division of Arts & Museums will enable Tanner Dance to bring beauty  
123 and artistry into the lives of all Utahns for another 75 years:

124       NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of Utah, the  
125 Governor concurring therein, recognizes and celebrates the 75 years of dedicated service and  
126 artistic enrichment provided by the Tanner Dance Program to Utah, beginning with Miss  
127 Virginia Tanner in 1949 and continued by Mary Ann Lee and her faculty and staff of Tanner  
128 Dance to present day.

129       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor commend Tanner  
130 Dance for remaining committed to Virginia Tanner's philosophy to give students the  
131 opportunity to share their own voices through the arts, allow a more diverse population in Utah  
132 to benefit from the outstanding programs, and retain a position as an internationally-recognized  
133 innovator in arts education.

134       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor celebrate the past  
135 75 years of achievements and look forward to the many more moments of beauty, artistry,  
136 inclusivity, creativity, and inspiration University of Utah Tanner Dance will bring to the state  
137 of Utah.