

May 17-18, 2023

ITEM 206-1002-R0523

**Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Dance on Michele Antonioli;
University of Montana-Missoula**

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Michele Antonioli from the faculty of the University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for her 27 years of dedicated and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon her by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Professor Antonioli's commitment to the field of dance, status in the state as a master teacher, contributions to countless individual students, and ability to unify people to come together in appreciation of ballet have earned her the respect of dance professionals in Missoula, across Montana, and throughout the Region. Few individuals have inspired the love of ballet and expressed the beauty of the discipline as extensively as Professor Antonioli.

Early in her career, Professor Antonioli danced professionally as a ballerina with the Houston Ballet and Germany's Frankfurt Opera Ballet (with whom she toured internationally). She earned her MFA in Dance from Texas Christian University, where she also received a BA in Geology. Her varied and cross-disciplinary interests enabled her to connect with diverse individuals from all backgrounds. Professor Antonioli is equally adept at sharing the love and beauty of ballet with individuals brand-new to dance as she is with seasoned professionals. Her colleagues report that she leads by example, continuing her own professional development by continually attending teacher workshops at the American Ballet Theatre and studying with noted professionals throughout the US and Canada. Professor Antonioli is an American Ballet Theatre® Certified Teacher who has successfully completed the ABT® Teacher Training Intensive in Primary through Level 5 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum.

While her knowledge base is extensive, it is her heart and soul, and all she gives to each student, that made her a transformational member of our faculty. One of Professor Antonioli's strengths was identifying the personal orientation of a student (physically/emotionally/intellectually) and recognizing their strengths to guide them in accomplishing more than they believed they could. The magic of ballet, the beauty of the form, and the integrity of hard work and discipline is conveyed, year after year, to students across Missoula by Professor Antonioli.

Ballet is a challenging discipline. Most students do not have what they perceive as the mythological "perfect ballet body." Repeatedly staring into a mirror can challenge a dancer's self-image, especially for developing teens. Eating disorders and body-image issues are common to ballet dancers. Professor Antonioli is highly sensitive to fostering a body-positive environment and is widely celebrated for her individual attention to students' mental and emotional well-being as well as their development as artists. Her extensive gifts as a teacher remain with her students throughout their lives.

Throughout her career, Professor Antonioli remains highly attuned to the ever-changing needs of today's youth through social media and pop culture. There are few who can convey the importance of a 400-year-old tradition to a young person and make it feel engaging, essential, and relevant. Professor Antonioli

delights equally in talking esoteric ballet pedagogy with a colleague as explaining a plié to a beginner; she is happy spending hours finding the perfect music for her students to dance to.

Ballet is a challenging discipline that few individuals can master. Over the course of her career, Professor Antonioli made a highly formalized art form accessible for Missoula audiences and created life-long aficionados of ballet. Her impact as a mentor, teacher, advocate, and artist is extensive and showcases a lifetime of contributions to arts education.

Professor Michele Antonioli is an exemplary arts educator, highly deserving of recognition as an Emeritus Professor of Dance.

ATTACHMENTS

None