



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 1, 2022**

**Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey
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Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey Presents the Race, Place & Diversity Award to Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersey and Community Leader Qiana Thomason

Kansas City, Missouri – Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey’s annual **Race, Place & Diversity Awards Dinner** recognizes individuals and organizations that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity within the community and on a national level. The 2022 Awards Dinner will be held **Thursday, November 3, 2022, at the Sheraton Crown Center.**

This year’s event will honor legendary **Olympian and philanthropist, Jackie Joyner Kersee**, and Kansas City’s own **President and CEO of the Health Forward Foundation, Qiana Thomason**. The program will be moderated and emceed by award-winning journalist and **KSHB Anchor Dia Wall**. The event co-chairs are Calvin Ricks and Peg VanWagoner.

“This year’s honorees have demonstrated their commitment to the very tenets of diversity and equity that the RPD Award represents. We are thrilled to recognize their work and allow them a platform to share their inspiring stories with our community”, Melanie Miller, CEO of Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey.

Just prior to the event, KCFAA will hold a special meet and greet with the Olympian and area youth involved in athletics including track and field and dance. Mrs. Joyner-Kersey will talk with area youth about leadership, service to others and taking care of their health. She will take questions from the audience and the media.

“We are thrilled to be hosting this special opportunity for many bright aspiring athletes in Kansas City to meet a real Olympian who is not only a champion on the track but also a champion in promoting the values of equity, justice and service.” Melanie Miller, CEO of Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey.

Jackie Joyner-Kersey, six-time Olympic medalist and Sports Illustrated Greatest Female Athlete of the 20th Century, is also lauded for her philanthropic work, including advocating for children’s education, health, racial equality, social reform, and women’s rights. In 1988 she founded the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation, a multifaceted non-profit with programs to improve the quality of life for the youth and families it serves in the areas of education, health, after school care, and physical exercise in the East St. Louis area. Mrs. Joyner-Kersey is also the inaugural **Hoffman Legacy Honoree**, endowed by Kansas City philanthropists, Sharon and John Hoffman.

Qiana Thomason, President and CEO of the Health Forward Foundation, began her fight for equality in healthcare for underserved people years ago after personally experiencing hardships as an uninsured patient and later as an insured person subjected to potentially life-threatening medical racism. Throughout her career, she's worked tirelessly to advance the health and overall well-being of individuals living in marginalized communities.

- The Awards Dinner will take place on **November 3, 2022**, beginning with a **VIP reception with the award recipients at 5:45 p.m. followed by the dinner and award ceremony at 7:00 p.m.** at the **Sheraton Crown Center, 2345 McGee St, Kansas City, MO 64108.**
- Ms. Joyner-Kersey will be the featured speaker for an exclusive Youth Roundtable Discussion on the afternoon of November 3rd. A diverse group of Kansas City area students have been invited to participate in this interactive discussion.
- Tickets and sponsor opportunities are available at www.KCFAA.org/RPD. This event is open to the public. Questions may be emailed to Events@kcaa.org.

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Race, Place & Diversity Award Dinner

Thursday, November 3rd, 2022 | 7 p.m.

Sheraton Crown Center

2345 McGee St, Kansas City, MO 64108

Tickets: \$150

About Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey

The mission of Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey (KCFAA) is making dance accessible to all people by presenting the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II, teaching young people critical life skills through dance, and modeling interracial and multi-cultural community partnerships. For more information, visit kcfaa.org.