



# JOFFREY BALLET

CHICAGO

## Founders of The Joffrey Ballet

### **Robert Joffrey**

Robert Joffrey was born in Seattle, Washington in 1930 and died in New York City in 1988. In 1953 he established The Joffrey Ballet School/ American Ballet Center. In 1956 he founded The Joffrey Ballet- and ensemble of American dancers for whom he choreographed, taught, commissioned original ballets, and reconstructed rare classics. In the process, he built what is now acknowledged to be one of the major international dance companies. Mr. Joffrey was a master teacher and a respected authority on dance. He was sought after world-wide as an adjudicator for festivals and competitions. His legacy lives on not only in his company but also in the network of ballet workshops he created across the country. In 2000 Robert Joffrey was inducted into The National Dance Museum.

### **Gerald Arpino**

Gerald Arpino was born in Staten Island, New York in 1923 and died in Chicago in 2008. He co-founded The Joffrey Ballet with Robert Joffrey in 1956 and served as Associate Director. Upon Joffrey's death in 1988, Mr. Arpino succeeded him as Artistic Director. Mr. Arpino choreographed his first work, Ropes, in 1961. Shortly thereafter, he became the company's resident choreographer. He created more than one- third of the company's repertoire. His ballets are in the repertoires of companies around the world. Mr. Arpino was the first choreographer commissioned to create a ballet to honor the office of the American presidency; he was the first American commissioned by a city, San Antonio, to do a ballet. In 1993, he produced America's first full-evening rock ballet, Billboards, set to the music of Prince. Mr. Arpino received numerous awards and honors over his long and prestigious career. In 1995 he moved The Joffrey Ballet to Chicago. Prior to that move, no ballet company had ever successfully been transplanted from one part of the country to another.