

2017 GALA AWARDEES



Pamela Crutchfield is co-founder of DanceWorks Chicago, a small company devoted to the professional development of young dancers and choreographers. In 2009, Pamela received the prestigious Ruth Page Award. She is also a recipient of the Friend of River North Chicago Dance Company award and has been a volunteer in the Ann Barzel Dance Collection at the Newberry Library. Pamela has underwritten the creation of new choreography for Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Hubbard Street 2, River North Dance Chicago, Giordano Dance Chicago and Luna Negra Dance Theater. Pamela is on the advisory board of numerous dance companies and served on the Hubbard Street Dance Chicago board for five years. Additionally, she served as a board member of Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance. Most recently Pamela was an honoree of the Arts & Business Council of Chicago's 25th Anniversary Celebration. She is currently a director at the Old Town School of Folk Music. Pamela previously served on the boards of Free Street Theater and The Poetry Center of Chicago.



Dame Libby Komaiko is the founder and artistic director of the Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater and the annual internationally acclaimed American Spanish Dance and Music Festival. She has choreographed half of the company's extensive repertoire of over 125 works, and has produced their major international Flamenco ballets and folkloric suites with guest artists from Spain, Juan Mata, Ana González, Manolete, Paco Alonso and Juanjo Linares. She has been the recipient of numerous civic honors, national awards, and choreography fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Chicago Office on Fine Arts. Professor Emerita in the Department of Music and Dance at NEIU, Chicago, Dame Libby created and developed the first complete academic program for Spanish dance and music in an American university.

His Majesty Don Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, in 1983 awarded Libby Komaiko the highest honor Spain bestows on foreign nationals. She received the Lazo de Dama de la Orden de Isabel la Católica (Ribbon of the Dame) in recognition of her achievements in promoting throughout the United States the artistic, cultural and educational values of the Spanish tradition in the fields of music and dance. She was decorated at the award ceremony following the opening night gala performance of the American Spanish Dance Festival on June 10, 1983. Dame Komaiko was the first American artist to receive this honor at that time.

She has performed with the dance companies of José Greco and Lola Montes, and for theater, opera, television, film, and orchestra. Guest performances with the Ensemble Espanol include with Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. She has studied in Spain and the United States with Maria Alba, Nana Lorca, Lola Montes, José Greco, Elisa Stigler, Edo, Manolo Vargas, Paul Haakon, María Magdalena, Pedro Azorin, Ciro, Pacita Tomas, and Roberto Lorca. Learn more about Dame Libby's extraordinary career at <http://www.ensemblespanol.org/>