



News from Livingston County, NY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In honor of Black History Month

**Livingston County Historian's Office celebrates the life and work of Bill T. Jones (1952 -)
Artist, dancer, choreographer, writer and National Honoree**

Mt. Morris, NY- Bill T. Jones was the 10th of 12 children of migrant farmworkers. He and his parents worked the fields of Wayland in Steuben County, sold fruit from Geneva to Geneseo, and lived in a modest home in Springwater. From these humble beginnings Jones went on to achieve greatness. After graduating from Wayland High School he then began his dance training at the State University of New York at Binghamton (SUNY), where he studied classical ballet and modern dance.

According to his extensive biography the multi-talented artist, choreographer, dancer, theater director and writer has received numerous honors and awards including Tony Awards, induction into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2009 and named "An Irreplaceable Dance Treasure" by the Dance Heritage Coalition in 2000. Before forming the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company in 1982, Mr. Jones choreographed and performed nationally and internationally as a soloist and duet company with his late partner, Arnie Zane.

Mr. Jones has received honorary doctorates from Yale University, Art Institute of Chicago, Bard College, Columbia College, Skidmore College, the Juilliard School, Swarthmore College and the State University of New York at Binghamton Distinguished Alumni Award. His memoir *Last Night on Earth* was published in 1995 by Pantheon Books. In 2010 Mr. Jones received the Kennedy Center Honor and then in 2013 he was among the recipients of the National Medal of Arts and Humanities presented by President Obama at the White House.

In an interview in 2010 Bill T. Jones spoke of his visit back to this area in 1999 when he stopped to see his former Springwater home and said the countryside was "very beautiful." Jones also remarked that his drama teacher at Wayland had a profound impact on him and influenced the direction of his future.

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