



Christopher Dolder Class of 2022

Christopher graduated from Oroville High School (OHS) in 1979 and was a member of the California Scholastic Federation (CSF) all four years and the National Honor Society for his last three years. He played football and tennis as a freshman and competed in track as a long and triple jumper his last three years and was a four-year member of Block O.

Upon graduation from OHS, Christopher attended the University of California at Berkeley on a full scholarship. Christopher took a leave of absence from UC Berkeley after his freshman year to attend Butte College, where he took classes in theater and business law, competed in the triple jump, and performed for the Butte College theater group while making the Honors List with Distinction. He returned to UC Berkeley his junior year where he took theater and dance classes, joined the Delta Chi fraternity, and was cast in the UC Berkeley produced Bay Area Repertory Dance Company. He toured with BARD throughout California and Nevada from 1982-1984 and was fortunate to travel to the United Kingdom to perform in theaters in London, Buxton, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh. While a student at Berkeley, he received the Eisner Prize for excellence in dance and the Mark Goodson Award for Distinguished Theatrical Talent. He also was awarded the Departmental Citation that required both academic and artistic excellence, and was acknowledged as the department's highest honor to the student who most embodied the values of the Department of Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. Christopher graduated from UC Berkeley in 1984, earning a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Dramatic Art-Dance.

After Berkeley, Christopher moved to New York City to train at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. He was cast in the Martha Graham Ensemble in 1985 and was promoted to the main company in 1986. Christopher toured the world with Martha Graham from 1986-1991, attaining the rank of soloist. While performing for Graham, he also pursued his interests in choreography and videography. He formed his own company, Christopher Dolder and Friends, in 1991. He and dance partner Anne Westwick left New York to return to California, after Graham's death, in April 1991.

In Fall 1991, he entered graduate school at Mills College and began teaching at UC Berkeley. He earned his MFA from Mills College in 1993. He taught as a full-time lecturer at Berkeley and was the artistic director of the Bay Area Repertory Dance Company (BARD) from 1991-2006, choreographing new works, touring, and teaching master classes, workshops, and residencies throughout the west coast, Nevada, Hawaii and Baja California.

In Spring 2009, Christopher became an Assistant Professor in the Division of Dance at the Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Meadows Dance has long been regarded as one of the leading dance programs in the nation. He was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 2015, and became Chair of the Division in 2019.

Christopher teaches all levels of the Martha Graham technique and conducts research in dance kinesiology, exploring new forms of physical data captured in biomechanics. He is currently in the final editing stage of his documentary, *The Ecstatic Dance of Burning Man: Permission to Transcend*, a ten-year research project filmed in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, chronicling the emergence and evolution of dance sub-cultures throughout the history of the Burning Man event.

Deeply involved in his university work, Christopher has always managed to find ways to contribute to society. He toured with the Bay Area Repertory Dance Company to over 30 elementary, middle, and high schools, and senior centers throughout California, Nevada, Washington and Baja California, to perform and to teach outreach masterclasses.

In 2002, he toured with BARD to Oroville to perform *Riverboy* at the State Theater. *Riverboy* is Christopher's homage to his roots, growing up on Bird Street and spending much of his time on the river. While touring Oroville with his dance company, he also taught master classes in the Martha Graham technique to students at Oroville and Las Plumas High schools.

Christopher married his college sweetheart, Anne, a dancer, choreographer, and teacher, in December 1988. Together, they have choreographed, performed, and toured dance works for over 20 years throughout New York, California, and Hawaii. Their three children are currently attending, or have graduated from, SMU. Christopher would like to point out that he has come full circle. The great dust bowl migration brought Texans to Oroville, and now he has returned to his even deeper roots.