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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**KRAVIS CENTER'S POPULAR LUNCH & LEARN SERIES BEGINS WITH FORMER BALLERINA WENDY WHELAN**  
**2018 "ArtSmart" Line-Up Highlights Whelan, three popular Broadway producers and The Fondas**

**(West Palm Beach, Fla.)** Judith Mitchell, CEO for the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, announced that former New York City Ballet (NYCB) member Wendy Whelan will begin the popular Kravis Center's 2018 *ArtSmart Lunch & Learn* series on January 22, 2018, at 11:30 a.m. The series will once again be co-chaired by Lee Wolf and Steven Caras.

One-of-a-kind New York City Ballet dancer Whelan started out in her career inspiring company directors Jerome Robbins and Peter Martins to feature her uniqueness. Whelan's subsequent rise to Principal Ballerina status coincided with a rapidly growing fan base, an enormous audience who continue to cheer her on to this day. Now 50 years old, following hip surgery and a glorious farewell at NYCB, Whelan dances on, collaborating with today's most innovative contemporary choreographers, promoting their important work in the process.

*ArtSmart Lunch & Learn* guests will join Whelan as she details her rise from anomaly to stardom. *Restless Creature*, the new documentary profiling Whelan's life, is currently being held-over in theaters across the country. Excerpts will be featured in a revealing, dancer-to-dancer conversation with fellow NYCB alumnus, Steven Caras.

The series of three continuing arts education events includes lively lectures presented during lunch prepared by Catering by The Breakers at the Kravis Center. Tickets for *Lunch & Learn* lectures are \$95 and are held in the Kravis Center's Cohen Pavilion.

The subsequent 2018 *ArtSmart Lunch & Learn* line-up\* includes such varied topics as *Broadway Titans: The Life of a Broadway Producer* with Fran Weissler, Roy Furman and Rodger Hess, three successful Broadway producers who will share their unique role in bringing blockbuster shows to Broadway on February 19 and *The Fondas*, a conversation around one of Hollywood's legendary dynasties on March 19. *Broadway Titans: The Life of a Broadway Producer* and *The Fondas* are sold-out, wait list only.

Award-winning business leader, actress and lecturer, Lee Wolf also serves as a Life Trustee of the Kravis Center. A 14-year dancer with the New York City Ballet, Steven Caras maintains an active schedule as a published author, featured lecturer, photographer, dance critic, guest ballet master and fundraiser. After 19 years of Lee Wolf chairing the series, Steven Caras joined her in 2012 to form this dynamic duo as co-chairs for the *Lunch & Learn* series for *ArtSmart* at the Kravis Center.

The Kravis Center is a not-for-profit performing arts center whose mission is to enhance the quality of life in Palm Beach County by presenting a diverse schedule of national and international artists and companies of the highest quality, by offering comprehensive arts education programs, by providing a

Palm Beach County home for local and regional arts organizations to showcase their work and by providing an economic catalyst and community leadership in West Palm Beach, supporting efforts to increase travel and tourism to Palm Beach County.

For more than 25 years, the nonprofit Kravis Center for the Performing Arts has helped students of all ages fuel their imaginations and expand their lives through comprehensive arts education programs. Last season, over 60,000 schoolchildren attended numerous performances through the Kravis Center *S\*T\*A\*R* (Students and Teachers Arts Resource) *Series*. More than 3,000 adults attended *ArtSmart* continuing education classes and lectures – with topics ranging from Dr. Ruth Westheimer to Judy Garland.

The Kravis Center is located at 701 Okeechobee Blvd. in West Palm Beach, FL. For general information about the Kravis Center or the *ArtSmart Lunch & Learn* series, please visit [kravis.org](http://kravis.org) or call the box office at 561-832-7469 (561-832-SHOW).

\*Please see below for details on each 2018 *Lunch & Learn* lecture.

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**MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2018 AT 11:30 A.M.**

**Wendy Whelan: Former New York City Ballet Member**

***A Dancer-to-Dancer Conversation with Steven Caras***

***A Kravis Center Cultural Society Event***

Like caviar, New York City Ballet dancer Wendy Whelan was at first an acquired taste. But soon this wiry, angular, one-of-a-kind artist inspired company directors Jerome Robbins and Peter Martins to feature her uniqueness. Whelan's subsequent rise to Principal Ballerina status coincided with a rapidly growing fan base, an enormous audience who continue to cheer her on to this day. Now 50 years old, following hip surgery and a glorious farewell at NYCB, Whelan dances on, collaborating with today's most innovative contemporary choreographers, promoting their important work in the process. *Restless Creature*, the new, aptly named documentary profiling Whelan's life, is currently being held-over in theaters across the country. Excerpts will be featured in a revealing, dancer-to-dancer conversation with fellow NYCB alumnus, Steven Caras. *Sponsored by Susan Bloom.*

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2018 at 11:30 A.M.**

**Broadway Titans: The Life of a Broadway Producer**

***With Fran Weissler, Roy Furman and Rodger Hess and moderated by Lee Wolf***

***A Kravis Center Cultural Society Event***

Join Lee Wolf as she interviews three successful Broadway producers who will share their unique role in bringing blockbuster shows to Broadway. Roy Furman, who took home three Tonys in 2017 for *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Hello, Dolly!* and *Sweat*, adding to his collection of dozens more including *Evita*, *The Color Purple* and *The Book of Mormon*, Fran Weissler, who with her husband Barry, has won Tonys for *Chicago*, *Waitress*, *Pippin*, *La Cage Aux Folles* and *Gypsy* among many others and Rodger Hess, known for his Broadway, Off Broadway & Touring hits which include *The Great Comet of 1812*, *All My Sons*, *Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and tours of *Evita*, *Annie* and *A Chorus Line*. *Sponsored by Leona F. Chanin. SOLD OUT – WAIT LIST ONLY*

**MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018 at 11:30 A.M.**

**The Fondas**

***A Conversation with Lee Wolf and Steven Caras***

***A Kravis Center Cultural Society Event***

The Fondas, one of Hollywood's legendary dynasties, have made their mark on American history in film, television, theater and political activism. From patriarch Henry, who's been featured in more than 100 films and television shows, to his highly outspoken, Academy-Award winning, fitness guru daughter Jane, to son Peter, who's had his own fair share of the spotlight. Enjoy this special presentation with Lee Wolf and Steven Caras as they delve deep into the colorful and complex lives of the Fondas. *Sponsored by Leona F. Chanin. SOLD OUT – WAIT LIST ONLY*