

The original documents are located in Box 10, folder “6/29/76 - Meeting Sandra Fortune, Ballerina” of the Sheila Weidenfeld Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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9.45

Letter of encouragement

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

6-17

June 16, 1976

SHEILA: Re: Sandra Fortune photo with Mrs. Ford 6/29. So. PORTICO EN ROUTE TO MASS. + CAR.

Mrs. Gerald R. Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Ford:

Robert
Centrell
1246
N.E.

If there is a half hour in your schedule between now and July 5, I am hoping you might consider paying a visit to the Jones-Haywood School of Ballet, at 1200 Delafield Place, N.W., here in Washington.

The School's prime star -- Sandra Fortune, a 25-year-old native Washingtonian -- is the world's top black classical ballet dancer.

Miss Fortune will be leaving Washington on July 5 to compete in the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria.

While no American ballerina has ever won one of the 3 medals of this competition, there is an excellent chance that Sandra Fortune will be America's first winner.

I think it would be a tremendous send-off for her, and a great tribute to Washington's black community, if you as this Nation's first lady of dance would indicate your interest and support.

My administrative assistant is in touch with Susan Porter and I simply want you to know I think this would be a wonderful action on your part if it is at all possible. Let me add a personal note -- Janie and I feel you are performing a superb job as First Lady. We are intensely proud of you.

Sincerely yours,

William A. Steiger, M.C.



FACT SHEET

Request:

It is hoped that the FIRST LADY would give her personal support to black Washingtonian ballerina, Sandra Fortune, before Sandra leaves on July 5th to compete in the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria.

Competition:

Varna International Ballet Competition will be held July 8-25, 1976. This respected competition was organized in 1964 and approximately 120 contestants from 30 countries will compete for 3 medals. No American ballerina has ever won, but Fernando Bujones of the American Ballet Theater won best male dancer in 1974.

School:

JONES-HAYWOOD SCHOOL at 1200 Delafield Place, N.W. is in the heart of the black community of Washington, D.C. The school was organized over 30 years ago for blacks interested in ball training. The CAPITOL BALLET COMPANY was founded later to give dancers an opportunity to perform and to educate the Washington audience to classical ballet.

MISS DORIS JONES AND MISS CLAIRE HAYWOOD, the founders and directors, are in their 60's, well-respected and loved by the community. Their former students include Louis Johnson, who choreographed the musical Purlie, Chita Rivera of Broadway and movie fame, and Sylvester Campbell, former premiere danseur with the Netherlands and Canadian ballet companies.

THE CAPITOL BALLET COMPANY is governed by an integrated board and receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the D.C. Arts Commission. Board members include Mr. Delano Lewis, V-P of C&P Telephone Company; Mrs. Roscoe Dellu, wife of California Congressman; Dr. Elizabeth Stone, top black executive at HEW and Father Kenneth Truelove, Episcopal minister.

Dancers:

SANDRA FORTUNE (Mrs. Joseph Green - she was married 6 months ago) is a 25-year old native Washingtonian, who received all training at Jones-Haywood. She is considered the top black classical ballet dancer in the world and has been featured in many black publications and international dance magazines. She has, however, been unable to break into the white ballet competition in the United States and remains with the Capitol Ballet Company.

SANDRA is the pride of many black Washingtonians and danced at the Mayor and City Council's Inaugural Concert at the Kennedys Center in 1975.

SANDRA attended public school here, Howard University and George Washington University. She teaches at Jones-Haywood School.

SYLVESTER CAMPBELL will be Sandra's partner, but at 35 he is over the age limit to compete. He is a former student at Jones-Haywood, a Washingtonian, and a professional dancer.

Suggestions:

It is hoped that the First Lady would show her support for Sandra before the competition in one of the following ways:

1. Give a White House tea in Sandra's honor and invite Washingtonians and White House friends to meet her,
2. Invite Sandra to dance at some White House function,
3. Visit the studio at Delafield Place and watch Sandra prepare for the Competition.



June 29, 1976

Dear Sandra,

As you depart for the International Ballet Competition in Varna, Bulgaria, I am grateful for this opportunity to convey both my congratulations and my encouragement as you undertake this difficult but worthwhile challenge. You will indeed beautifully represent the United States and the vitality of the arts in our nation today. May your journey be successful.

The President joins me in conveying our warmest best wishes,

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sandra Fortune Green
705 Riggs Road, Northeast
Washington, D.C. 20011

SP/ph



Sent in application to start in school part-time possibly at Mt Vernon - blez (Applied but)

Topeka newspaper - part-time

Personalities

What actress Mae West did for Cary Grant 45 years ago, she may do again for another handsome aspiring actor. Some lucky contender who shows up today at the Samuel Goldwyn Studio will be chosen by the 84-year-old screen vamp to star opposite her in a film version of her play, "Sextette," just as the once unknown Grant was chosen for the male lead of her 1931 film, "I'm No Angel."

A mass of actors is expected to answer the role's advertisement, which was placed in the "Daily Variety." The actors are required to have a British accent, be between their late 20s and early 30s, and present a resume and photo. The character will be a titled Englishman.

At least one American will blow out 110 candles on her birthday today. Sophia DeMuth of Ayr, Neb., is the only known person living in the state who tops the state itself in the numbers of years it has to celebrate.

Also celebrating his birthday was Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, husband of Queen Juliana. The prince, who turned 65 yesterday, currently is being investigated for allegedly helping Lockheed secure a contract with the Dutch government.

Florence Chadwick, who swam the English Channel four times in the 1950s, says she still is swimming, "but in the sea of finance." Chadwick, who does her laps as a stockbroker now, spoke at the Southern California Exposition where her 84-year-old mother has won seven first-place awards and 11 second places in rose-judging at a flower show Monday.

Singer Harry Belafonte, who has been visiting Cuba since last week, notes that the unity of the Cuban people is impressive, according to Radio Havana.

Actor Sidney Poitier, who accompanied Belafonte, mentioned the difficulties that blacks in the United States had encountered in attaining "complete citizenship," the radio broadcast noted.

Both actors are in Cuba to participate in cultural programs sponsored by the Cuban film industry.

Washington ballerina Sandra Fortune has the best wishes of First Lady Betty Ford to bolster her before participating in the international ballet competition to be held next month in Varna, Bulgaria.



Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier, top; Florence Chadwick in a 1951 photo, above right; and Mae West.

The 25-year-old dancer of the Capitol Ballet company met Mrs. Ford at the White House, where the First Lady presented her a letter which offered her hope for success from President Ford and his wife.

Susan Ford, a budding photojournalist, will return to Kansas where she had a photo internship last summer at The Topeka State Journal and The Topeka Capital-Journal, to continue clicking her camera.

She will study photojournalism at the University of Kansas for the second semester of the 1976-77 academic year.

Willie Hamilton, a Labor member of Parliament who has made a reputation for himself as Britain's most outspoken critic of the monarchy, has finally hit upon an issue in which he defends Queen Elizabeth II.

On her controversial purchase of an \$885,000 estate for her daughter, Hamilton argues that it's her money, and she can spend it as she pleases. He claims the ultimate problem with the monarchy is not how it spends its money but that such expenditures are possibly "due to the failure of successive governments to tax that wealth in the same way as that of all other citizens."

—Carla Hall



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

was
Asst designer
at Metro.

Melroy ~~H~~ Robert
29 yrs old
designed exhibits



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