

## Get to know member (and former Board Chair) Dianne Bailey

By Pam Johnson



I am meeting Dianne Bailey at the Charlotte Ballet, where Dianne is getting ready to go into rehearsal for “Dancing with the Stars of Charlotte,” the Ballet’s annual fundraising gala. Dianne checks her cell phone to stay updated on how much money her team has raised so far. (Each community dancer raises money that is split between the Charlotte Ballet and a nonprofit of the dancer’s choice. Dianne is dancing for the new community access program at Discovery Place and to honor new ED and new WIF member Catherine Horne.) \*\*Don’t forget you can cast your vote for Dianne at <http://charlotteballet.org/tickets/gala>. Voting ends Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 5PM!

### **Dianne, tell us about this fundraiser.**

Part of me can’t believe that I am doing this. I am NOT a dancer, not at all! I danced once when I was 5 and again at my wedding. But ultimately I was persuaded to conquer my fears by the opportunity to support the Charlotte Ballet and the new Welcome program at Discovery Place. When I took this leap of faith, little did I know my partner would be Charlotte Ballet’s phenomenal Jordan Leeper (not a stage name!).

I can’t resist asking WIF members to go online and cast a vote for Jordan and me at <http://charlotteballet.org/celebrity/dianne-bailey/> The fabulous women of Charlotte have joined forces to pull me through this crazy experience. I am the only WIF member in this year’s competition. Don’t forget that WIF was an original funder of the Charlotte Ballet’s REACH program!

Check out my official Charlotte Ballet video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgg4YUy0tJs&feature=share> (don’t miss my shout-out to the Women’s Impact Fund) and my fun video set to “Happy” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhKxlbBuyAs>

Thank you! Thank you! THANK YOU!

### **How did you become involved with the Women’s Impact Fund?**

I met both Claire Tate and Mary Lou Babb through separate community activities, and they invited me to join the founding board of WIF. At the time I was new to Charlotte, just beginning to build my career, had no children yet, and it was such a privilege to be at the table with these amazing women: Sally Robinson, Ruth Shaw, Jill Flynn, Judy Allison, Toni Freeman, Robin Branstrom, Patty Norman, Sandra Conway and so many others... think of it!

Through these women, I learned about leadership and was blessed to share in our powerful, strategic vision for women’s philanthropy in Charlotte. It is breathtaking how many gifted women are members of Women’s Impact Fund. When I served on the Nominating Committee I realized how fortunate we are to have this breadth and depth of talent among our membership. WIF is fostering a culture to nurture and amplify these talents.

I served as chair of the Women’s Impact Fund when we reorganized into the self-governing, self-sustaining organization that we are today. It was a great opportunity for me to grow as a leader and to practice what I preach as a lawyer to nonprofits. It was a lot of work, but I loved every moment.

**You are a lawyer who specializes in working with nonprofit organizations, their senior management and volunteer leaders. Is it hard to separate your volunteer life from your professional life?**

My professional life aligns so closely with my personal passions, which is a great gift. I am so fortunate to live each day authentically. When I arrived in Charlotte, I realized that this type of law was underrepresented here. I couldn't find anyone focused full-time on serving as an outside general counsel for nonprofit organizations. I wrote a business plan and Robinson Bradshaw agreed. It is such an honor for me to serve these organizations. Our clients are saving the world!

**What are your goals for Women's Impact Fund?**

It is so important that we all focus on bringing in new members and retaining our current members. We have such a gift to offer other women from WIF. I am surprised that we don't have 500 members by now. We have a vibrant, powerful, diverse group of women with programming that offers an insider's view of the nonprofit sector. Why isn't everyone encouraging our friends to join? So that's one goal: 500 members.

The first goal of 500 members dovetails with the second goal. With 500 members we would be able to fully fund our annual grants and build a flexible reserve fund for special grants. We need a pot of flexible dollars to address emerging community needs. It doesn't need to be a tremendous amount -- maybe \$25,000 to \$50,000 -- that we can quickly deploy earning our seat at the table with the most influential corporate and private foundation funders.

**Tell us a little bit about the Women's Collective Giving Grantmakers Network (WCGN) conference this fall. You are co-chairing this with Sonja Nichols on behalf of WIF, which is partnering with WCGN.**

We have been selected to host the WCGN National Leadership Forum Oct. 15-17 at the Ballantyne Resort. We are going to blow them away with our Southern hospitality. Our goal is to have every woman leave feeling full and inspired and empowered, ready to change their communities, one grant at a time. Our tag line is "Doing. Being. Leading." Stay tuned for your opportunity to be part of this exciting national celebration of women's leadership in philanthropy.