

# Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members  
Receiving Emeritus Status



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The biographical sketches were written by  
colleagues in the departments of those honored.

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## Ze'eva Cohen (Ludwig)



Born in Israel in 1940, Ze'eva Cohen began her early dance training with the German expressionist choreographer Gertrude Kraus, and went on to study the Graham technique from Rena Gluck. At 19, Ze'eva began her fruitful 10-year relationship with Anna Sokolow, one of modern dance's leading choreographers. Dancing first with Sokolow's Israel-based Lyric Theater, Ze'eva later traveled to New York City to become a student at the Juilliard School and to perform starring roles with Sokolow's New York dance company, the Anna Sokolow Dance Company. With her compelling presence and unerring dramatic gifts, Ze'eva was a perfect performer for the emotional work of Sokolow and garnered critical praise for her riveting performances in such historic works as *Rooms*, *Dreams*, and *Lyric Suite*.

In 1965 Ze'eva, by then choreographing her own work, banded together with a group of independent choreographers to form the choreographer's collective Dance Theater Workshop. In the ensuing years, she further developed her own choreographic voice and also performed in the works of Art Bauman, Jeff Duncan, and Kathryn Posin. Although the initial mission of the collective focused on independent dance artists pooling their resources, Dance Theater Workshop has evolved over the years to become an essential and pivotal organization fostering the work of dance artists the world over.

With her reputation as a dancer established and with a growing career as a choreographer, Ze'eva was invited in 1969 to Princeton to develop a dance program for its first class of women students. Those first dance classes, predominantly attended by men, were held in a small room attached to Dillon Gymnasium. Performances were given at the only place possible, the campus lawns. Ze'eva steadily worked to take the dance program beyond those humble beginnings and to create a place for it beside the other creative arts as a legitimate area of academic study.

In her 40 years as head of dance, Ze'eva guided the development of dance at Princeton to its current status as a separate certificate program. Some of her students, like dancer Silas Riener and choreographer David Rousseve, became interested in dance for the first time through her classes and went on to become important figures in the dance world.

In 1971, Ze'eva decided to place her choreography on the back burner and devote herself to her deep need to perform. Known for her seemingly inexhaustible energy, she ambitiously launched a solo dance repertory program which toured throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Israel for 12 years under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Arts Residency Touring Dance Program. As a choreographer and dancer, Ze'eva came of age as the golden era of Modern Dance was winding down and the Judson Church era was just beginning. Her own choreography straddles those two periods and draws on her strengths as an expressive and dramatic performer. The repertory of her solo program included her own choreography as well as commissioned works and reconstructions from 23 choreographers. In 1983, Ze'eva founded the 10-member Ze'eva Cohen and Dancers, which performed her work in New York and on national tours through 1988. Ze'eva has also choreographed works for the Boston Ballet, Munich Tanzproject, Batsheva Dance Company, Inbal Dance Theater of Israel, and the Alvin Ailey Repertory Dance Company.

Ze'eva's personality is as warm, spirited, and dramatic as her dancing. For four decades she personified dance for Princeton's students, whom she encouragingly and fiercely cajoled and prodded into discovering their own physical and expressive capacities. Building a strong and vital program of dance at Princeton stands beside Ze'eva's international career as a performer and choreographer as one of her finest artistic achievements—one which will continue to serve the Princeton student body for many years to come.