The Bell System presents
Better Communications for a Better World.

Communicating a dream through dance.

From the day young Arthur Mitchell showed up, in top hat and tails, to audition for New York's High School of Performing Arts, it was obvious that he had a statement to make. After graduation, Mitchell accepted a scholarship to the School Of American Ballet, and went on to become the first black principal dancer with New York City Ballet. In 1968, he founded the Dance Theatre of Harlem, a performing company and school that has been instrumental in introducing black youth to the world of classical dance. Mitchell's dance theatre has won international acclaim. More importantly, it has become a springboard that launches careers, realizes potential, and changes lives. Fourteen years into the project, Arthur Mitchell shares some of his motivation and observations.

When Mitchell started the Dance Theatre, people laughed. He says, "At that time, there was a fallacy that blacks could not do classical ballet, and I was an exception. So rather than argue, I said, 'let me show them.'" And show them he did: Learning to audit, write proposals and raise funds, Arthur Mitchell made his dream a reality. And the black youth of Harlem came pouring in to share it. Four hundred of them the first summer. Mitchell taught them to understand and appreciate classical dance. But he also taught them much more.

"Discipline," Mitchell says, "transcends into everyday life to make you a better human being."

The Dance Theatre of Harlem produces great dancers. But it also produces great people who leave Arthur Mitchell's school with a new awareness of human potential. "Do not make yourself or your life so subjective that you're locked into one thing," he tells them. And they have not, using their new-found discipline to become doctors, lawyers, administrators and writers.

What Arthur Mitchell has communicated is belief in the possible. For his dancers, it means toning the mind as well as the muscles. For his audience, it is more evidence that opportunity is the path to excellence. And for his students, it means a lasting dedication to performance in everything.

Better communication is the key to a brighter future for all of us. And there is much we can all learn from great communicators like Arthur Mitchell. The Bell System is proud to acknowledge their contribution to society. As pioneers in communications technology, the Bell System knows better communications make a better world.

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