

Glorya Kaufman: Using Art As a Vessel

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My interview with renowned philanthropist Glorya Kaufman as she describes her passion for dance and giving back.

"I never cared who watched," said Glorya Kaufman as she smiled unapologetically on the edge of a long, plush coach in the sitting room of her house. The prolific philanthropist and founder of the USC Kaufman School of Dance sat across from me discussing her long-time love of dance. She described to me how it had been one of the most prominent sources of healing in her own life, especially after the heartbreak of her husband's untimely death.

Kaufman focuses on her and her husband's journey in her memoir, *Glorious Dance Affair*, which illustrates how art helped breathe life back into her world after he was gone. She was able to find the power within herself to commit the rest of her life to helping others during this period of heartbreak.

Her belief in the ability of art to change lives has played a large role in propelling her through various philanthropic endeavors such as Julliard, Saint John's Health center, Inner City Arts, The Los Angeles Music Center, American Jewish University and so much more.

When Glorya started to describe the students and families that have thanked her for what she has done, tears filled her eyes. It was evident how much she cares for every person she has affected. She loves that the students at USC call her "Mom."

Glorya exuded confidence from the moment I met her. As we talked, I realized she is firmly focused on the future - never living in the past or dwelling on it for too long. Throughout our conversation, she loved to tell me about her new projects and hopes.

Currently, she is working hard on her next endeavor at the non-profit organization, Vista Del Mar, helping children and families with challenging situations.

When she isn't helping others, Glorya loves to attend performances. She recently went to see a ballet at The Music Center in Los Angeles, which combined three different dance companies and principal ballerina Tiler Peck. She lit up as she told me how in awe the performance left her.

Eventually, I told Glorya how dance had helped me in my own way. I grew up with a speech impediment that I couldn't seem to correct for most of my childhood, but I learned to express myself through dance and the beauty of movement. As I explained this to Glorya, she glowed with understanding and appreciation.

Throughout the interview Glorya continued to stress to me how grateful she was for the life she has been given. She stays firmly committed to her philanthropic projects and told me that she "gets more than she gives." Even spending such a short time with her gave me a glance into the incredible purpose and meaning that she receives through her work.

