

# Lindgren, Robert Class of '41

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Robert Lindgren, a Victoria native and founding dean of the School of Dance at the University of North Carolina, died May 10, 2013 at his home in Winston-Salem. He was 89.

Lindgren was a “titan in the dance world,” said Alex Ewing, a former UNC School of Arts chancellor.

“He was a revered alumnus of three major ballet companies in his time,” said Ewing, who knew Lindgren for more than 50 years. “A very special friend to hundreds of students and associates, he will always be loved and treasured here in North Carolina and throughout the entire dance world.”

Lindgren began studying ballet in Victoria before joining the American Ballet Theater in 1940, then served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War.

Lindgren was UNCSA’s dance dean from 1965 to 1987, when he left to become general director and later president of the School of American Ballet in New York City. He served there until 1991, when he and his wife, Sonja Tyven, returned to Winston-Salem.

Lindgren began his career as a dancer, and became a noted performer. He danced with such companies as the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the American Ballet Theatre and New York City Ballet. He performed on Broadway, on national television and in tours sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

His students at UNCSA included Mel Tomlinson, who was a soloist with the New York City Ballet and later taught at UNCSA for four years; the late Edward Stierle, a leading dancer with the Joffrey Ballet; and Frank Smith, a former soloist with the American Ballet Theatre. Smith has taught at UNCSA since 1983.

“Bobby Lindgren was not only the founding dean of the School of Dance, but in my years as an NCSA student, Bobby was a father figure to many of us and later a mentor throughout our careers,” Smith said.

Lindgren was born in Victoria on Dec. 9, 1923. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, two daughters and four grandchildren. Two nieces — Diane Brown and Barbara Why-Wade — live in Victoria.