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Reinhart honored for contribution to arts

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Just three days after stepping down as American Dance Festival director -- a position he held for 43 years -- Charles Reinhart sounded overwhelmed by all the honors bestowed upon him during this season's six-weeks festival.

"I've got to get a head reduction tool," Reinhart, 80, said earlier this week in a telephone interview from his New York apartment. "I have a swelled head from all the praise."

Durham Mayor Bill Bell gave him the key to the city and proclaimed June 9 "Charles Reinhart Day." On behalf of North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue, North Carolina Arts Council Director Nancy Regan inducted him into the Order of the Longleaf Pine, presented to individuals who have a proven record of extraordinary service to the state.

In a program note, Pilobolus counted him as one of their "dearest Old Friends" since 1972 when the troupe made their debut at ADF, then located in New London, Conn. They thanked him for his candid wisdom and encouragement. "In fact, his unwavering support and friendship has become one of the defining features of our personal and professional lives," they said in the note.

Reinhart recalled some of the surprises. On July 23, the last day of the festival, African American Dance Ensemble director Chuck Davis had invited Reinhart to observe a master class he was teaching. "It turned out to be this big honoring of me," Reinhart said.

The flash dance performed by about 40 ADF students and his daughter, Ariane, took him completely by surprise in the lobby during the first intermission on opening night of the Paul Taylor Dance Company at Durham Performing Arts Center. The dance, choreographed by Mark Haim, included some jitterbug moves as well as part of Taylor's "Aureole," the first Taylor dance Reinhart saw that convinced him to take the job as manager of Taylor's company in 1962, thus beginning Reinhart's career in modern dance.

Then, there was "the" dance, the world premiere of Taylor's "The Uncommitted," created in honor of Reinhart. Taylor has shied away from honoring people in this