

# FULFILLING MY DREAMS IN THE WEST

As a three year old I knew that dance was going to be my life. My love only expanded as I begged for lessons, doing everything I could to earn my way, from working in a candy factory at 14 to winning scholarships. All my curiosity and schooling were dedicated to dance, following its history and performers as my inspiration. Seeing my first *Giselle* with Nora Kaye and Alicia Alonzo, I cried on cue at *The Red Shoes* – cinching my devotion. I was hooked!

So with a one-way ticket from Chicago to New York, I began

my journey through Ballet Russe, studying with such legendary teachers as Anatole Vilzak (Anna Pavlova's partner), Leon Danielian, Perry Brunson and Ballet Theatre's William Dollar. I was impelled into a professional career

in dance, ballet and on Broadway with Richard Rodgers, Jack Cole, Ethel Merman, Gemze DeLappe, Onna White, George Abbott, finally moving to L.A. and directing and choreographing for movies, TV, commercials, and music videos.

However, the time finally came when, because of circumstances and injuries, my career after 40 years in dance was over – an overwhelming reality filled with feelings of loss and shame. After wondering what I'd do to support my child and myself, I saw a small ad in Backstage

## Financially Supporting Dancer-Clients



L to R: Board of Directors' President, Cynthia G. Fischer, Esq & Founding Director & Grants Administrator, Ann Barry (Photo: Jerry Ruotolo)

In a time when resources are so scarce, Career Transition For Dancers would be doing only half its job of supporting dancers' career transition endeavors if we did not provide financial assistance to those who need it to further their transition process.

The organization has a strong history of supporting higher education and degree programs and providing expert advice and funding for new business enterprises. We realize that these two services can be defining conduits for helping dancers to pursue and fulfill their dreams. I see this program as being the means by which dreams are

transformed into realistic attainable goals. Once a dancer is clear as to the next step they want to take, this program helps them move toward a viable plan of action.

To that end, since 1985 Career Transition For Dancers has awarded over 4.1 million dollars in scholarship and grant awards. Yes Virginia, there can be a life after dance and we're here to help make it possible.

- Ann Barry

Founding Director | Grants Administrator

for Career Transition For Dancers. In my first meeting with my career counselor, I took one look at the Kleenex box and cried for two weeks straight...I realized that I didn't know if I'd ever find something that made me as happy and fulfilled as my dance career.

Fortunately, with the guidance of the career counselor, I was encouraged and began to reach out to a new life of discovery. I decided to try every tiny dream I ever had: being a trader in the Mercantile Exchange, helping needy families, being an agent, teaching reading and English overseas and going back to school to get my degree. When I was dancing I had no time to follow through with any of those desires so I stuffed them deep inside me... waiting to be rediscovered. I then turned those ideas into actions and began to volunteer for everything, just to learn. I flew to Chicago for a weekend course in pit trading at the Mercantile Exchange. I scrubbed floors to learn computer skills. I sorted out imaginings that didn't work for me from those that did. I followed my dreams and kept that fire going inside me.

In the middle of my journey of discovery, Ann Barry, Career Transition For Dancers' Executive Director at the time, asked me if I would be interested in being the Administrator for the Los Angeles office. I had to think about it. Did I want to cut this wonderful exploration short? Then I realized that my work with Career Transition For Dancers would allow me to give back to my wonderful dance community in more ways than I had ever dreamt. I knew what it meant to become a professional dancer/choreographer. I knew what it meant to be out of work or injured, what it



L to R: Joanne Divito, Los Angeles Administrator; Maria Pogee, Cynthia Gregory, Chairman Emerita; Cheryl Pandelis, Nevada Ballet Theatre, Board Member; and Dancer-client and Las Vegas NOP ambassador, Pam Marvel. (Photo: Suzie Jary)

meant to know that a career was winding down, what it took to build a bridge to another profession, to start over again, and to reach out to dancers and create conversations that would help them in the transition process. Finally I had found a field that fulfilled me as much as a dance career, albeit in different ways, while continuing to be challenged and excited each step of the way. The possibilities of growth were endless and that's what finally moved me to help dancers and the dance community. My spirit is and always will be with dance and dancers.

- JoAnne DiVito

Los Angeles Career Transition For Dancers' Administrator

## Grants & Scholarship Calendar

### The Caroline H. Newhouse Scholarship Fund

Provides \$2,000 scholarships or grants to initiate an academic or retraining process or to help professional dancers with start-up money for a new business. Eligibility for financial assistance is based on work history as a professional dancer. Dancers who are eligible must complete an application form and provide documentation of a performing work history.

2011 Deadline for Submissions: August 31 | November 2, 2011

### The Sono Osato Scholarship Program for Graduate Studies

Provides \$5,000 scholarships toward graduate degrees in fields other than performance dance. The Osato scholarship program was created to help dancers meet the substantial financial commitments that come with the pursuit of a graduate-level degree. Areas of graduate study supported by the scholarship include professional degrees (law and medicine), the medical arts (nursing, physician's assistant, physical therapy, etc.), the helping professions (social work, counseling, psychology, creative arts therapies, etc.), physical and social sciences, education, business and the humanities.

2012 Deadline for Submissions: March 30, 2012

For updates on deadlines and eligibility guidelines please visit our website at:  
<https://www.careertransition.org/Programs/ScholarshipsAndGrants/Eligibility>