

FINDING AND WELDING YOUR PASSION AND STRENGTH

I have spent the last 25 years of my life focused on a very singular goal, that of becoming a professional dancer. Unaware of what it would ultimately require of me, I started dancing as a very young child. Even then, I was certain that if I dedicated all of my energies toward this dream, I would

attain it; and, in truth, my path has managed to closely follow that plan.

I attended numerous dance schools of recognition and have had many opportunities that most aspiring dancers can only imagine. I attended The Juilliard School and have been a member of the Hubbard Street Dance organization in Chicago organization for over seven years. Nonetheless, a dancer's career is short-lived by its very nature. The stresses of dance on the human body are great and eventually, it simply stops working as healthfully and efficiently as it once did. I found myself at that point last year. Refusing to believe that I had nothing more to offer the world, I looked both inward and outward to discover the next stage of my personal evolution.

I started reading various periodicals including National Geographic, Audubon, and the Atlantic in order to recalibrate my concept of the world at large. In reading numerous articles outlining current events, I became furious, disgusted by environmental destruction borne of ignorance, misguidance, and greed. Believing that I am capable of so much more than what I have achieved thus far, it is paramount that I continue to do something that allows me to make a difference in the world. I have already found (and wielded) the strength within myself to move audiences; it is now time to use that power towards a different end. Too realistic to believe that people will simply want to behave better of their own volition, I want to direct and influence others so that they may become better stewards of the planet.

I came to the conclusion, through much thorough deliberation, that above anything else, I want to study environmental law. Law school will give me the detailed and focused education that will arm me to take on my challenge of becoming a participant in policy creation and regulation. I have survived a career in professional dance and despite my lack of practical experience in law, believe that I can apply that which is currently required of me towards this new endeavor. As a dancer, I already possess many important skills in a field where tradition and precedent is established, individual strength is respected, ability to think and react quickly is necessary, and intelligently directed creativity as a means of development is admired. I am, above anything else, disciplined.

I am honored that in August of this year, I will be joining the Class of 2014 at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law. If my past successes are any indication of the future, I am going to be just fine.

- Laura Halm
Chicago Dancer-Client | Law School Student

Creating Winter Heat



L to R: Winter Heat Chairs: Sylvia Golden, Janice Becker, Gerald M. Appelstein, Kelly DeMarco and Michele Riggi.

(Photo: Robert Mayer)

Winter Heat has been a labor of love. I first started the event six years ago after in-depth conversations with Alexander Dubé, Executive Director of Career Transition For Dancers. As a member of the Career Transition For Dancers Board of Directors, I wanted to create something lively and fun that embodied dance for all guests and participants. Plus, I love Latin music!

The concept was to have fun, giving the organization's patrons and supporters the opportunity to co-mingle with dancers while raising money. I was fortunate to have an entrée to a 22-piece Latin band that played with Tito Puente! This was the birth of my Winter Heat salsa party... no speeches... no auction... no raffle – just plain fun. It was a hit from the first night and has grown every year since 2006.

This past year, we have doubled our net earnings, raising a total of \$44,700 for Career Transition For Dancers' programs and services. When I think about the ripple effects of my small idea and having seen a room filled with happy, dancing people, my heart soars with joy. This is how dance gives joy to people. I remain a true lover of dance.

- Janice Becker
Board of Directors' Member