



Studio Dance Subject Guide

Compiled by Heather McClain, Senior Archivist
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This guide is intended to assist researchers in locating archival materials pertaining to the “Anchorage Dance History: Connecting Generations” project, housed at the Anchorage Museum Archives and Library. It is not necessarily a complete listing of all dance-related holdings. Please contact Archives staff at resourcecenter@anchagemuseum.org or 907-929-9235 for assistance in locating other collections of interest.

Using this Guide

The materials in this subject guide were compiled and shared by Alice Sullivan in 2024 and 2025. The project titled, “Anchorage Dance History: Connecting Generations,” honors individuals who made a significant contribution to studio dance in Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska from the 1950s to present. Artists were asked to submit a biography along with 1-10 images and related materials with descriptions that represent the artists and career highlights.

The artists are organized by Generations. Generation I is comprised of artists who started dance studios, schools, and companies to teach and perform foundational and classical forms of dance, such as ballet, modern, jazz, and tap, at a time of rapid growth and community development in the Southcentral region during the 1950s to 1960s. Generation II represents artist connected to or taught by Generation I that continued the growth of their programs, or started new ones between the 1970s and 1980s. Generation III represents the continued growth and connection of the studio dance community in Anchorage and the surrounding area from the 1980s to present day.

Generation I

Followed their Dreams – these innovative artists created schools, programs, and companies. They championed and created dance opportunities and collaborations in the 1950s and 1960s as the city of Anchorage developed a vibrant arts community.

Nona Baker / The Dance Den

Gretl Benson Hafer / Rhythm School of Dancing

Barbara Clausen / Barbara’s School of Dance

Guky Doane / Rhythm School of Dancing

Lynda Lorimer Plasse / Anchorage Civic Ballet (Ballet Alaska) and Conservatory of Dance

Margaret Auld Nelson Webber / Margaret Webber School of Dance

Steve Primis / Academy of Classical Ballet and Primis Ballet Ensemble

Generation II

Built upon and made significant contributions to our rapidly growing studio dance community in the 1970s and 1980s – founding schools, companies, and the programs, which advanced dance education, performing, and elevated the arts.

Lori-Lynn Bradford / West High Dance / Dance West
Janet Carr-Campbell / Music (Dance) Machine
Dr. Jill Flanders Crosby / UAA Department of Theatre and Dance
Gail Florio / Dance Spectrum Alaska
Claire Johannsen Gentile / East High Contempo
Karen Grotts / Center Stage Dance (Elmendorf Air Force Base)
Donna Branstrom Hunt / Youth Dance Spectrum
Christina Kautzky / Moving Company North
Lisa Dworkin Kerr / ACDC
Amy Lindsey / Dance Program AK Moving Arts Center
Alice B. Sullivan / ADT / Eagle River Ballet / DanceArts AK

Honorees

Kristen Vierthaler, Choreographer/Dancer / ACDC / ADT / Miscellaneous companies
Brian Jeffery, Guest artist / Collaborator / XSIGHT! / UAA Department of Theatre and Dance

Dance Champions

Eric Wallace
Darl Schaaff
Ira Perman

Generation III

Buoyed by existing programs, these mid-career artists have created new programs, and are connected directly or indirectly to previous generations of dance.

Children's Dance Theatre / Jennifer Blomfield / Theresa Rhinehart 1993
Michelangelo Canale / ACBA Founder / Artistic Director 1997
Irish Dance Company of Alaska 1997
Northern Lights Celtic Dancers 1999
Gabe Harvey / Co-founder Underground Dance Company 2005
Mikal Preston / Studio 49 2005
Becky Fuller / Momentum Dance Collective 2008
Heather Canterbury McEwen / ERB 2011
Stephanie Wonchala / Pulse Dance Company 2010
Studio Pulse Center for Dance 2013
Valerie Thurston / The Tap Studio 2015

Holly Fullmer / Dance Dynamics (closed May 2020)

Eagle River Stars (closed 2015)

AK Dance Promotions

Bekah's Dance Experience (closed)

Current List of Dance Schools and Companies

Alaska Dance Promotions

Alaska Dance Theatre

Alaska Moving Arts Center

Alaska Native Heritage Center Dancers

Anchorage Music and Dance Center

Anchorage Classical Ballet Academy

Arctic Academie de Dance

Barbara's School of Dance

Dancing While Wonderfully Made

Eagle River Ballet

Eat High Contempo

Flow Zone Dance Studio

Hi'ilei Aloha Dance Company

Irish Dance Company of Alaska

Momentum Dance Collective

Motion Cloud

Northern Lights Celtic Dancers

Pulse Dance Company

Sankofa Dance Theater

Studio 49 School of Dance

Studio Pulse Center for Dance

Stebbins Dancers of Anchorage

The Drift Gallery

The Tap Studio

University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Department of Theatre and Dance