

Swingapalooza 2012

Professional Staff



Debbie Figueroa (Austin, TX) **Head Judge & Workshop Instructor**

Website: [Angel and Debbie](#)

E-mail: ADSwing@aol.com

Debbie has been competing on the West Coast Swing circuit with her husband, Angel, since 1999. Together they have won many major titles including the USA Grand Nationals, Dallas Dance, Boogie by the Bay, and many others. They are also top dancers in Invitational Strictly Swings and Jack & Jill competitions. Debbie has earned her place as one of the most respected professional dancers on the circuit, with such

accomplishments as

- ❖ Award winning choreographer and competitive dancer in many styles of dance
- ❖ Appeared on television, stage, and dance floors across the country
- ❖ 2007 Dallas Dance Swing Dance Hall of Fame Recipient
- ❖ First Place-Phoenix Champion of Champion's
- ❖ Judge and Invitational Jack and Jill Competitor on the National Swing Circuit
- ❖ Many time Strictly Swing Champion at national swing events
- ❖ Professional Classic Two-Step World Champion
- ❖ Holds 9 professional UCWDC Classic and Showcase Masters titles.
- ❖ Hustle Champion



Matt & Crystal Auclair (St. Louis, MO) **Judges & Workshop Instructors**

E-mail: mistermatt@charter.net

Matt Auclair is a 6 time national swing dance champion. He has taught and competed nationally and internationally. Matt was in a New York tour called Swing Dance America for a year. He dances with his lovely wife, Crystal. She has competed and taught with Matt across the nation. They love doing the thing that brought them together; Dance!!



Laura Christopherson (St. Paul, MN) **Judge**

E-mail: laura.christopherson@gmail.com

Laura started dancing in 1999, she taught ballroom dance for two years before falling in love with West Coast Swing. She's been traveling the national swing circuit, competing and winning numerous Jack & Jill and Strictly Swing contests since 2001. Laura has been ranked top 20 on the NASDE tour several times. Laura lives in St. Paul, MN and loves dancing with and meeting people all over the country.

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Damon & Lisa D'Amico (Katy, TX) **Judges & Workshop Instructors**

Website: D'Amico Dance

E-mail: damon@damicodance.com

Damon and Lisa met in New Orleans and began dancing together in 1993. They traveled the country competing on the UCWDC circuit winning numerous titles. It was there they played a major role in building one of the largest dance communities in the southern United States. In 1998, Damon and Lisa felt it necessary to make the move to Houston in order to continue on the path they'd began. Shortly after the move they started a family while continuing to teach, travel and compete. In the last 12 years they have helped turn Houston into one of the biggest and best social, as well as competitive, dance communities in the country. Their group classes thrive. They have established a name for themselves as two of the best teachers in the country. They are most proud of their 3 beautiful children. Not too far behind them are their junior dancers and previous junior dancers, now instructors. The D'Amicos have enjoyed watching, as well as being a part of, the progress of the Houston dance community. Damon and Lisa continue to travel the country teaching and competing in Swing, Country, Ballroom, and Latin professionally, as well as with their students. The D'Amicos want everyone to share the passion of dance, and the joy that it brings to their lives.



Jeanne DeGeyter (Tulsa, OK) **Judge & Workshop Instructor**

Website: Jeanne DeGeyter

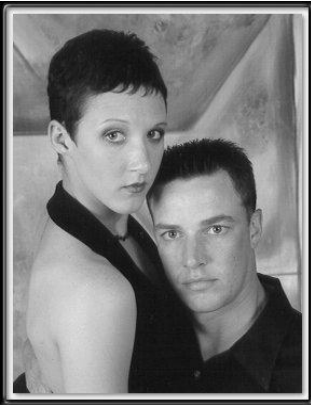
E-mail: jeanne.degeyter@cox.net

Jeanne has been dancing since 1994, when she began in West Coast Swing and quickly moved into country dancing on the UCWDC circuit, in couples and teams. In Swing, she has earned 7 US OPEN Swing Dance Awards, including 2 Championship titles. In both 2010 and 2007, she placed in the TOP 5 Females in the WSDC J&J Tour. In 2007, she earned a NASDE Showcase Championship title and finished in the top 10 Females for the NASDE Tour. Jeanne has also earned the prestigious America's Classic Top Teacher Award 3 times. In country, she competed extensively in Teams and even traveled to Europe for an invitational demo performance with the Rockin' Country Ladies, twice earning a UCWDC Championship Title. Her focus is on West Coast Swing, fulfilling a passion for variation and interpretation.

Jeanne's background did not come from traditional dance training as many competitors, but from cheerleading and gymnastics, where she brought her performance and agility skills to the dance floor. Jeanne has trained under several top instructors in the country and travels regularly as a Guest Workshop Instructor, coach and choreographer. She is President of [Swing Tulsa Style](#) Dance Club, a [World Swing Dance Council Member](#) Instructor and is the the Event Director for three different Swing Events—[Tulsa Fall Fling](#), [Tulsa Spring Swing](#) and [Grand Prix of Swing](#) (Kansas City).

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Shawn & Kristen Moody (Metairie, LA)

MC, Judge, and Workshop Instructors

E-mail: smoody504@gmail.com

Shawn and Kristen have been teaching, competing, and performing West Coast Swing together since 2000. While traveling the professional swing dance circuit, they have won many prestigious awards. They were finalists in the Classic Swing division at the U.S. Open Swing Dance Championships in Anaheim, California in 2001 and placed 6th at the 2003 US Open in the Showcase division. Shawn and Kristen are known for their smooth and sophisticated style of West Coast Swing, Shawn and Kristen attribute their dancing style to the intense formal training they have received in Ballroom, Jazz, Latin, Tap, Ballet and Swing. They are currently traveling the country teaching, coaching and competing. Kristen

owns and operates Dancers' Pointe Performing Arts Studio in Metairie, LA where they specialize in teaching dance to children, teens and adults.



Michael Stephens (Houston, TX)

Judge

Website: Time to Dance

E-mail: michael@timetodance.biz

Michael is EXTREMELY thrilled to have worked with all the ladies, the choreographers, the ladies, the coaches, and (of course) the ladies that helped him win his many dance titles. He is MOST delighted with his two first-place finishes in the U.S. Open Swing Dance Championships, two first-place finishes in the Masters National Swing Dance Championships, as well as his 2012 induction into the Dallas D.A.N.C.E. Hall of Fame. Michael is also VERY delighted with the support that his students have given over the last five-years in helping him win the top Dance Studio Award at the Houston DanceCity

Championships in addition to the many successes of his ladies in the Pro/Ams at all the contests they have attended. He continues to teach (private, group, and workshop lessons), coach, choreograph, judge, coordinate contests, and well, just have plain ole fun at dancin'. Michael has been working hard with the other pros building Houston into one of the most fun and successful dance communities in the country.



Ben Hooten (Houston, TX)

Judge

Website: Ben Hooten

E-mail: ben.hooten@live.com

At the age of 25, Benjamin Hooten has been dancing and competing for almost 16 years, and has loved every second of it. He started off dancing country & western and took to it like a duck to water. With over 300 amateur competition wins, Ben has a few accomplishments that really stand out. Before he was able to drive he won the UCWDC Country World Championship Junior Division from 1997 to 2001. As he got older he

started to discover his true talent for West Coast Swing. At 15 he made it on to an all professional team that went to the US Open and placed 3rd. During all of these years of dancing Ben still found the time to be accepted as a cast member for the Broadway show Urban Cowboy, but unfortunately due to school obligations had to decline. Benjamin now competes professionally on the NASDE West Coast Swing circuit, and is hoping for a very good year. With a true love of dance, his teaching skills are being honed in. Ben truly loves the feeling people get when they enjoy dancing, and he wants to spread that to as many people as possible.

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Cher Peadon (Dallas, TX)

Judge & DJ

Website: America's Classic

E-mail: MsL8nite@sbcglobal.net

Aka "MsL8nite" ... Music is an integral part of Cher's life and remains a powerful influence with her present endeavors. Her passion for music and the dance community is felt when she spins. Cher is also the Event Director of Americas Classic Championships and Creator of Global Swing DJs Association.



Deborah Szekely (Houston, TX)

Judge

Website: www.szekelydance.com

E-mail: nydebs@gmail.com

Deborah Székely ("Say-Kay") averages about 40 weekends a year traveling both nationally and internationally to spread West Coast Swing. She is among the first pioneers to take, teach and perform West Coast Swing exclusively in Europe and the South Pacific. she has helped get it firmly entrenched in many countries including, England, Scotland, New Zealand and Australia. They also were asked to be advisors to the first ever WC Swing Club in Australia. She is a veteran dance performer with numerous stage and production credits. A 5-time U.S. Open Swing Dance Champion with technique and ability accumulated and refined over 25 years of teaching and performing Ballet, Jazz, Tap and now Swing. Deborah is presently competing and teaching with several partners. She has consistently placed in the top six at the U.S. Open Swing Dance Championships. She is U.S. Open Showcase Division winner for 1999 and 2000. U.S. Open Sophisticated Swing winners for 2007 & 2008 with her Former Partner Robert Cordoba and has been the Grand Nationals Champions for Classic and Showcase for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 and clinched the NASDE circuit for 4 Years in a row 1998-2001, undefeated in both Classic in 1999 and Showcase in 2000. Deborah Won the Champion of Champions Phoenix Invitational for 2000 & 2006. Deborah was inducted into the Dallas D.A.N.C.E. Hall of Fame in 2006.



Valerie Menard Rawlings (Lafayette, LA)

Judge

E-mail: trydancing@gmail.com

Valerie Menard Rawlings enjoyed a very successful and rewarding 12-year career in competition dance. She competed heavily in Country and West Coast Swing and some in Hustle. Winning 3 Overall World Championship titles in Country and placing in the top 10 in the U.S. Open Classic category twice, are among her highest achievements. Valerie has also had several students who won World Championship titles in Country. She continues to teach classes and privates in her spare time as she runs her wholesale/retail business in Lafayette, LA. Wishing all the dancers the best of luck, she is excited to judge at Swingapalooza this year!

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Victor Loveira (Gonzales, LA)

MC, Head DJ

E-mail: vloveira@yahoo.com

Originally from Havana, Cuba, Victor has over 25 years experience as a DJ and over 15 years experience as a swing DJ. Victor's first West Coast Swing (WCS) event to DJ was The Texas Classic in 1995 in Dallas, Texas. From that point on, he has had the good fortune of DJing many of the countries' top swing events including The US Open, Dallas DANCE, Boogie by the Bay, USA Grand Nationals, Americas' Classic, Liberty Swing, Swing Diego, Swing Fling, Summer Hummer, Nashville Classic, Worlds and Phoenix. Victor has also traveled internationally to DJ at prestigious swing events in London. To his credit, Victor is considered by peers to be one of the top Swing DJs in the business and travels approximately 40 weeks in a given year. In 2005, Victor was honored with the AllSwing DJ of the Year Award. He has also been a finalist for the last 5 years for the AllSwing DJ Hall of Fame Award. Most recently, he won Best DJ of 2011 at the first annual Westie Awards Gala, an honor bestowed on him by his west coast dance peers.



Ruby Lair (Houston, TX)

DJ

E-mail: rl728895@yahoo.com

Ruby began DJing for the west coast swing dance community in 2008 at the Melody Club in Houston, TX and continue to DJ there most Friday nights. Her love of music is only rivaled by her love of dancing. She really does spend countless hours seeking out new music to share with west coast swing dance community. She loves to see a floor packed with dancers and playing the music people love to dance to.

She has recently been honored as 2010 DJ of the Year by the AllSwing DJ group and nominated for a WAG Award as 2010 DJ of the Year. She has had opportunities to DJ at other local dance events, parties and competitions including: Novice Invitational 2009-2011, Houston Dance City Championships – 2009-2011, America's Classic Championships – 2010-2012 and DFW ProAm Jam – 2010-2011.



Ruth Gilbert (St. Louis, MO)

DJ

E-mail: drapesrus@aol.com

Ruth is a traveling DJ from St. Louis, Missouri. She plays at numerous West Coast Swing Competition Events across the country. Ruth has played at Tulsa's Spring Swing, Swing Dance America, Swingapalooza, DFW DanceProAm Jam. She was at Wisconsin Dance Challenge, Grand Prix Of Swing, Meet Me In St. Louis, Tulsa Fall Fling, and Spotlight Dance Challenge.

A proud accomplishment was to be invited to DJ three years consecutive at the America's Classic. Ruth DJ's locally at the STL Rebels and for other neighboring swing dance clubs. She has branched forward into Ballroom and Country events frequenting The Savoy Ballroom as well. Ruth has been the Audio Director for the STL Rebels since it's formation in 2006. Ruth is a Global Swing DJ as well as AllSwing DJ.

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Henry de los Reyes (New Orleans, LA)

DJ

Website: [Club Silhouette](#)

E-mail: reyes_64@cox.net

Henry is a member of Global Swing DJs and has been DJing west coast swing, ballroom, and country events for over 10 years. He is the House DJ at Club Silhouette in Metairie, LA, and also has been actively DJing local dance events in Baton Rouge. When he's not in the DJ booth, Henry is an active west coast swing and hustle competitor with multiple wins throughout his dancing career.