

THE CONQUEST TREASURES: DANCE TEAM PROFILES “IN THEIR OWN WORDS”



CRISTINA POLETO

I was born here in Albany on October 4, 1983. I started dancing at the age of 3 at The Hallenback School of Dance where my mother taught. When I was 4 years old I danced for Sesame Street

Live at The Egg in Albany, and at age 7 I danced in the Proctor's Theatre production of The Nutcracker.

In 2002 I tried out for the very first Albany Conquest dance team. I was thrilled to be one of the 12 girls chosen to be a Treasure. It was a great experience and helped me to truly realize how much I love to dance. It always helps when you're dancing for a great team!

While I was living in Albany during this time, my father was still living and working in California. Shortly after the first Conquest season, I decided to move back to California in Riverside with my family and my newborn niece, Avianna. Aside from working, spending a lot of time with my family, and helping to raise Avianna, I was a dance instructor for my sister's middle school cheerleading squad, creating all of their routines.

During the summer of 2003, my brother and my niece moved back to

Albany. Avianna became my incentive to also move back and leave behind the rest of my family. This was a struggle for me.

I then began to pursue another one of my passions at The Orlo School of Hair Design in Albany in August of that year and have since graduated. During my time at this school I tried out for the Conquest Treasures for the second time after having missed the second season. Again, I was thrilled to make the team. We have an awesome dance team to go along with a great football team.



JENN EASTMAN

I began dancing eighteen years ago at the age of three, and performed in my first recital at the age of four. It was here that my passion for dance took off and I haven't looked back since.

I began at the Susquehanna School of Ballet for seven years studying ballet and pointe. I then began taking other classes with Oneonta Tap Works, taking every type of class offered. I also attended dance conferences in New York City to learn from professional dancers and teachers, and to compete

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with my dance school. When I graduated high school, I didn't know where my dance career would go. I knew I didn't want to stop, but without pursuing it as an educational choice, I didn't know where it would lead.

When I came here to Albany to attend The College of Saint Rose, I had no outlet for my passion for dancing. I heard about the 2003 Albany Conquest Treasures Dance Team auditions and figured I had nothing to lose. The turnout of girls vying for a spot on the team was overwhelming. After a very demanding audition, I was both surprised and flattered to learn I had earned one of the 12 spots on the team.

Last year's season with the Albany Conquest was a completely new type of performing for me. Performing at the arena in front of thousands of fans was a completely exhilarating experience that I could not get enough of. I loved every minute of the season last year and I couldn't wait for this season.

Becoming part of the Albany Conquest Treasure Dance team has allowed me to share my passion with a huge audience. Each and every one of the individuals on this dance team is not only a phenomenal dancer, but a unique individual that has so much to offer.



JOANNA BUTTERFIELD

"5, 6, 7, 8..." These four numbers have been my "on your mark, get set, go" since I was three years old. My mother enrolled me at my local dance studio at a very young age.

Like most children who start dancing, it was tap and ballet that exposed me to the beautiful art of dance.

As I entered my teens, I continued to take tap and ballet, but also grew to love jazz and modern ballet. During my Junior and Senior years in High School, I was an assistant instructor at the studio where I grew up. Teaching dance was one of my favorite experiences of my dance career so far.

When I went to college, I would only go to a school that would let me major in art and also let me dance. Hartwick College fit this criteria.

In 2001 I happened to be on the Internet and on the Pepsi Arena website, there was an announcement regarding auditions for a dance team for the Albany Conquest. I really didn't know what I was about to get into with the Albany Conquest "Treasures" Dance Team. It is so hard to explain how exciting and thrilling it is for me every time I step out onto the field to perform. Being part of this organization has been a true "treasure" – all of it – the dance team, the office, the players, and, of course, the fans.

Being a three-year veteran Treasure dancer for the Conquest, I can see firsthand the Conquest Treasures continue to grow, both in sheer talent and popularity. We're definitely performers to look out for!





Turn to WNYT News Channel 13 for
Olympic Coverage for
the Capital Region August 11th - 29th!



WNYT News Channel 13 will join other NBC affiliated stations around the clock, 24-hour coverage of the XXVII Olympiad from the birthplace of the Olympics, Athens Greece. The start of the 24-hour around the clock coverage coincides with first day of the Olympics on August 11th and keeps going until the Olympics conclude August 29th. Check your local listings for information as to when specific sports are airing.

NBC will provide groundbreaking coverage of these Olympics. NBC is planning on bringing 800 plus hours of TV coverage of the 2004 Summer Olympics, which is nearly double the 441.5 hours worth of coverage they had for the Sydney Olympics in 2000, and will more than quadruple the 171.5 hours of coverage from Atlanta in 1996.

NBC will employ the use of all 5 of its broadcasting arms; the NBC network and the four cable channels MSNBC, CNBC, Bravo, and Telemundo. This will allow for unprecedented cov-

erage of every one of the 28 sports to be played in the Summer Olympics. NewsChannel 13 will carry the NBC portion of the telecast, while the four NBC cable channels will provide the additional coverage.

Perhaps the most intriguing note about NBC's coverage will be the participation of Telemundo in the Olympic coverage. Telemundo, an all Spanish-language channel, will feature the first exclusively non-English language Olympic broadcast the United States has ever seen.

Fresh off of 17 Emmy awards for its quality coverage of the Salt Lake Olympics in 2002, the quality of NBC's coverage of the 2004 Summer Games is sure to be stellar. The depth of coverage combined with the extraordinary athletic competition make the 2004 Athens Games an Olympics which undoubtedly will be talked about for years to come.

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Upstate New York is proud to salute four of its Olympic hopefuls.

Four New Yorkers are vying for U.S. Olympic roster spots for the Athens 2004 Games. More details can be found at web site of the U.S. Olympic Committee: www.usoc.com

Photo Credit: Getty Images



Erica Liu was born September 13, 1986 and hails from Saratoga, New York. Erica is a stand-out swimmer, and is looking to make the U.S. Olympic Team in the 100-meter breaststroke. This Olympic hopeful is regarded as one of the country's premier young swimmers. Swimming trials coverage begins July 9th, live at 8 pm, and again on July 11th at 8 pm, and finishes July 18th at 1 pm, and can be seen on WNYT News Channel 13.

Mary Obidinsky was born November 8, 1975 and hails from Oneonta, New York. At 5'9" and 130 lbs, this U.S. Rowing Team hopeful is certainly more than well equipped physically to make the team, and mentally she is sharp as a tack, as she graduated from Ithaca College. Check your local listings for Rowing trials coverage.



Cassandra Cardinal was born April 12, 1982 and calls Loudonville, NY her home. This Olympic hopeful stands at 5'2" and 125 lbs, and is looking to make the U.S. diving squad. Cassandra competes in the 1 meter, 3 meter, and platform dives. Cassandra attended Indiana University and still resides in Bloomington, Indiana. Diving team trials coverage begins at 10 am on June 12 on USA, and resumes that day on News Channel 13 at 2 pm, and again at 8 pm. Coverage continues on June 13 at 2 pm and 7 pm on News Channel 13.



Jennifer Edwards was born January 17, 1975 and is proud of her upstate New York heritage coming from Glens Falls. This U.S. Rowing Team hopeful stands at 5'10" and 128 lbs. An intelligent member of the crew, Jennifer graduated from George Washington University. Check your local listings for Rowing trials coverage.



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