



Jerseyville's Alex Foster is Inducted into Illinois Drill Team Association Hall of Fame

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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SPRINGFIELD - Alex Foster of Jerseyville was recently inducted into the Illinois Drill Team Association (IDTA) Hall of Fame.

The induction was done at the recent IDTA State Finals earlier in the month.

Foster said he was almost overwhelmed about the selection and extremely appreciative. He said the following about the honor:

“The Illinois Drill Team Association State Finals are always wonderful for the soul with inspiring performances by artists and athletes,” he said. “Being surrounded by educators, adjudicators and dance professionals that I so admire for setting the standard for all to strive for. This year was just that and much, much more. I am honored, humbled and surprised. Thank you to the IDTA Board of Directors, especially Judging Coordinator and cherished friend Cyndi Kraemer.

Synopsis About Foster’s Selection and His Honors

February 15, 2020

IDTA State Finals Competition

Springfield, IL

Nominated and voted upon by the IDTA Officers and Board of Directors

Cyndi Kraemer, Judging Coordinator and IDTA Director, introduced and presented the honor to Alex Foster, Certified IDTA Execution Judge.

Alex has been involved in IDTA for over 29 years, having served as the assistant coach for five IDTA State Championship JCHS Dance Teams from 1991-1998 under Coach Vicki Watkins who was Alex’s first dance instructor and IDTA recruiter

“Lay All ‘Your Love On Me!’” 1991 IDTA AA Prop State Champions

“The Phantom Of The Opera” 1995 IDTA AA Prop State Champions

“Miss Saigon” 1996 IDTA AA Prop State Champions

“Kiss Of The Spider Woman” 1997 IDTA AA Prop State Champions

Yanni’s “Deliverance!” 1998 IDTA AA Prop State Champions

Alex began judging for IDTA in 1999.

Alex also judges for the Missouri, Arizona, Oklahoma and Iowa State Dance Organizations and the Arizona Spirit Association.

He is the choral director at Saint Francis Xavier Parish in Jerseyville.

He is the former Director for both the Jersey County Fair Talent Competition and the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs State Talent Competition.

He was a 26-year member of the Anheuser-Busch Brand Management Marketing and Advertising Team and is currently a Broadcast Talent Manager for Extreme Reach servicing the Anheuser-Busch, Inc. and McDonalds accounts.

Alex served as the Dance Technique coach for the St. Louis Rams Professional Cheerleaders, where he also choreographed game day routines, USO Shows, and choreographed the ESPN Monday Night Football Half-Time Show featuring Grammy Award Winner Brian McKnight.

Alex holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the School of Fine Arts at Southern Illinois University.

Alex Foster has performed professionally as an actor, singer, dancer and choreographer for over twelve years on both local and national scales.

His credits include:

The St. Louis Union Station Entertainment Company, Robert F. Jani Productions-Los Angeles, CA;

The Muny Opera in St. Louis, MO - Corpo di Ballo del Teatro for the La Scalla Ballet Company of Milan, Italy featuring prima ballerina Carla Fracci and ballet master Bruno Vescovo in Franco Zeffirellis's production of "Swan Lake"

The National Touring Company of the St. Louis Entertainment Company, Lenwood Q. Sloane Productions-New York, NY

Riverton Productions-St. Louis, MO - the Russ David Orchestra and celebrity entertainer Dolly Parton.

The New Line Theater – St. Louis, MO - Rufus Poindexter/Aggie Dance Soloist in "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas"

Simon Zealotes in "Jesus Christ Superstar"

Harry Beaton/Sword Dancer in "Brigadoon"

Tony/Dream Tony in “West Side Story”

Seymour in “Little Shop Of Horrors”

Nutcracker/Cavalier/Russian Dancer in Tchaikovski’s Ballet “The Nutcracker”

He was especially honored to perform Gene Kelly’s role of Danny in the Mid-West Premiere of “Xanadu Live!”

His commercial credits include: “Show Me St. Louis”, “Hello St. Louis”, and Wehrenberg Theatres.

He was the Director and Choreographer for “A Disney Afternoon” at Catch-A-Rising-Star Comedy Club, and “Chicago” and “Jesus Christ Superstar” for the Calhoun Entertainment Company as well as numerous musicals for J.C.H.S.

History of IDTA

Before Illinois had a formal organization for dance/drill teams and coaches, there were some clinics and contests that were being hosted throughout the state. These functions were usually sponsored by outside organizations. In 1977 after hosting five annual contests, Pat Lester organized a group of drill team directors to formulate and propose a state contest series for drill/pom teams to the Illinois High School Association (IHSA). The proposal committee believed that Illinois needed to unify the contests in the state. Pat Lester, Steve Oracko, and Kathy Swan presented the proposal to the IHSA in the spring of 1977.

The answer from the IHSA was positive, but no action was taken. Two years later, Pat Lester and a new committee presented a second proposal in the spring of 1979 to the IHSA after a state-wide survey showed there was strong support for a state contest series. This proposal was rejected by the IHSA; however, the board gave the committee “its blessing” to begin an organization to serve the coaches and teams of Illinois. Thus, the Illinois Drill Team Association was organized to create an association which could encourage interest in poms, dance, drill, and tall flag activities in Illinois schools.

The organizational structure was designed, competition rules were formulated, and membership was offered. The founding officers were Kathy Swan, president; Pat Leaf, contest director; and Pat Lester, judging coordinator. The first state contest was held at Oak Park-River Forest High School on March 15, 1980.

Since those first years, IDTA has grown in many ways. The organization has a charter with the State of Illinois and is a legal non-profit organization. The executive board

includes representatives from 12 regions across the state, six officers, and five board of director members. The association has expanded the programs to include special events such as Start the Beat (a competition for soloists, duets, trios and small groups), Jump Start (a summer camp program for teams), Rising Star Awards, Student Academic Scholarships, and recognition of our Scholar-Athletes. All programs are open to members of dance and flag teams.

Membership includes approximately 140 dance and flag teams representing Junior High, Junior Varsity and Varsity programs from over 115 schools. Total student participation in IDTA activities is well over 1,600 members. IDTA is still expanding its programs and will continue to grow.