

State Fair Masters

Traditional Arts Indiana and the Indiana State Fair wish to recognize individuals for their mastery of a particular tradition and for their dedication to sharing their knowledge at the fair, year after year. These men and women give generously of themselves by exhibiting, demonstrating, or performing at county and state fairs. They are well known by neighbors and friends in home communities for a particular skill and for their commitment to passing their excellence on to others. To learn more about the State Fair Masters, please visit:

<http://www.traditionalartsindiana.org/programs/indiana-state-fair/state-fair-masters/>



Traditional Arts Indiana Presents *The 2018 State Fair Master*



Kathy Rucker
Clogging & Dance Instructor



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MATHERS MUSEUM OF WORLD CULTURES



Kathy Rucker: Clogging & Dance Instructor

I didn't care if I was a superb dancer—I just wanted to teach someone how to do what I love to do. ~ Kathy Rucker

Growing up, Kathy Rucker was always dancing. She recalls, “I was either dancing with the cabinet, dancing with the refrigerator handle, dancing in my room—dancing all over the house.” She would later study square dancing and round dancing but clogging “caught her eye” when she saw a group at a festival. She took clogging classes in Indianapolis and discovered that it was a fun way to exercise and to meet people. Before long, she started teaching her own classes. First one, then a second—but as quickly as she added a new session, it filled. Finally, she was up to teaching twenty-one classes each week. As she jokes, “It keeps the body in shape...it keeps the body tired.” To fuel her teaching, Kathy traveled around the country taking clogging and dance workshops and classes. In addition to learning how to dance better, these experiences taught her how to be a better teacher. She explains, “You can be a great dancer and a lousy teacher, and you can be an average dancer and a great teacher. I was going for the great teacher—I didn't care if I was a superb dancer—I just wanted to teach someone how to do what I love to do.”

In 1995, Kathy volunteered to manage a small dance stage at the Indiana State Fair. That first year, the crowds wanting to see clogging were so big that it blocked the roadway and the fair shuttles could not pass. To accommodate the popularity of the dance stage, the fair moved it several times to larger and better locations. Today, the dance stage is located in Celebration Park and has grown to as big as it can get. Throughout the run of the fair, the stage features a variety of dance groups and serves as a great promotional tool for dancers around the region. Two of Kathy's groups, The Circle City Cloggers and Still Kickin, are regular acts at the fair, performing several times each week. While the Circle City Cloggers consist of dancers from their teens on up, Still Kickin is for older adults, 55 and beyond.

Kathy also teaches line dancing in the Indianapolis area, including the Heritage Place Ladies of the Dance, a group of older African American women who dance to classic Motown as well as more contemporary popular music. For several years, Kathy taught twenty-one dance classes each week, but as she got older she slowly pared them down to the ten groups she teaches today. At 73, she says that dancing is more than a hobby or a job for her—it literally saved her life: “I've had cancer twice, and the doctors told me that if I hadn't been so physically fit I wouldn't have made it...I will probably continue to clog until I can't lift my foot anymore!”



Learn more about Kathy Rucker at:
<https://youtu.be/SX3wROfVmSg>
or scan the code to access the link.



Learn more about the Heritage Ladies of the Dance at:
<https://youtu.be/N6cHC4upwd4>