

# ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

*Connecting dancers past, present, and future*

## News and Features

### Marguerite Reid

This issue is dedicated to the life and legacy of the dance teacher Marguerite Reid. Read all about the highland dance teacher and how she got her start in the United States.

Learn about her past students' favorite memories, fun stories, and the large impact she left on the Highland Dance community.



## Welcome

Welcome back to the latest edition of our alumni newsletter. Here you will find exciting updates and events, but also stories, memories, and achievements of alumni like you.

We would love to hear from you if you have stories, photos, or ideas to share. Let's keep the spirit of Scottish dance alive together.

## Contact Info

email: [alumni@scotdanceusa.com](mailto:alumni@scotdanceusa.com)

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## HIGHLAND HISTORY



**Have you ever wondered how Scottish Highland Dance traveled across the pond to the United States? As our Seeds of Scottish Dance project continues to grow, now with over 500 names, we resume with our series of stories telling us who the people were who were instrumental in keeping highland dance alive in the US. This biography is the second in our series documenting Scottish dancing's early beginnings.**



**Marguerite Anne Watson Reid was born on March 19, 1933 in Philadelphia, PA. She was the only child of parents Isabel and Samuel Watson. With the decline of traditional industries in Scotland, Marguerite's parents immigrated to the United States with the promise of new job opportunities and a better quality of life. Isabel secured a job as an examiner in a sweater factory while Samuel drove a truck for the chain store, American Store/Acme Markets.**

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As a young child Marguerite traveled to Scotland with her grandmother. As she watched highland dancers dance aboard the ship, Marguerite's love for the sport was born. Soon after that trip at the age of five, Marguerite began dancing in Trenton, NJ with Wilma Buick. Marguerite was quite successful as a dancer, earning herself many medals and trophies. Her teaching career began at the age 13, while teaching her cousins, Helen Magee Hoffman and Judy Magee Hackett. She soon had to add cousin Tommy Miller, because she needed a fourth dancer for the Reel.



The Daughters of Scotia, a fraternal organization for women which celebrates Scottish heritage through friendship, and cultural activities, had their weekly meetings in a hall on Front Street in Philadelphia. This is where Marguerite began to acquire students. One of those students was Catherine Davidson Fisher. Marguerite began teaching at that hall and later in the basement of her home, of the well known, 2913 Benner Street. In later years she taught alongside her daughter, Linda, in Springfield and Media, PA.

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John Reid was a Chief Petty Officer on a submarine in the British Navy. He was part of a team that designed equipment to stop an aircraft which landed on ships. One day, while at the Navy Yard in Philadelphia, he and another officer were invited to a party at the Scottish Hall. It was there John was introduced to Samuel Watson, Marguerite's dad. Meanwhile, Marguerite was at another party, but came back to her Aunt Mimi's house to meet her dad, where all the sailors happened to be. Of course, that is where she met John. They dated while John was stationed in Philly, but soon he had to return to Scotland.

John eventually proposed. Marguerite and John wrote letters to each other while planning the wedding. As the wedding drew near, John could not get time off. 20 year old Marguerite went to Scotland and got married there in August 1953. As part of their honeymoon, the couple traveled to Gibraltar, Spain, and Malta, where John was stationed. Since Marguerite had grown up in the Philly area, they returned to Philly, settling into an apartment. Later they returned to Malta, living along the cliffs with the monkeys.

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## Marguerite Reid



In a few years, when Marguerite was ready to deliver her first born, she traveled back to Scotland where her daughter Linda Reid Tarpy was born. The family eventually travelled back to the Philly area aboard the Queen Mary. They bought a house and settled in the Northeast Philadelphia area, where Marguerite taught dance for many, many years. Marguerite's family continued to grow with daughter Debby and son Brian.

As Highland Dance was beginning to spread, she also provided a local competition to the number of growing events in the area. The Philadelphia Indoor Dance Competition, which began at that same Scottish Hall, was hosted by Marguerite's Dance School each November.

Folks often remember the "grannies", of many of the dancers, at that competition, working in the kitchen. You see, they were the ones who made the shortbread and empire biscuits which would "sell out" that day.

homemade  
**shortbread**  
cookies

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## Marguerite Reid



**In 1965, The Reid School, along with the dance schools of Rona Griffith, Isobel Johnson, and Winifred MacFarlane, all joined together as part of the half time entertainment at the Philadelphia Eagles and Dallas Cowboys Football Game held on Franklin Field in Philadelphia. The game was televised in the Dallas area, but unfortunately was blacked out in the Philly area. By the way, the Eagles lost to the Cowboys, 21-19. This is the type of entertainment dancers looked forward to before there were tattoos to perform in.**



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Another activity Marguerite was involved with was the documenting of a film based curriculum in dance, for Junior and Senior High School Students. The Philadelphia Dance Academy, under the direction of James MacGregor Jameson, helped produce the short educational films. The first film demonstrated a traditional Highland Fling along with step by step instruction on how to perform the dance. Part two focused on the Sword Dance and Seann Truibhas, which was performed in Highland dress and accompanied by traditional music (bagpipes). The purpose was to introduce students—particularly in American schools—to the cultural heritage and movement patterns of Scottish folk dances.

There is a connection with the Department of Education and the University of Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Dance Academy prepared research materials and Marguerite's dancers, Beverly Belcher, Lynne Erbrick and Sandra Weyman performed.



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**Marguerite Reid**

Here are links to the 1966, "Dances of Scotland" videos, featuring Sandra Weyman and Lynne Erbrick

[Dances of Scotland: Highland Fling](#)

[Dances of Scotland: Sword Dance](#)

[Dances of Scotland: Seann Triubhas, Strathspey and Half Tulloch](#)



Marguerite was dedicated to highland dance. She taught every Saturday from 9-4. Since she taught in her home it was easy to call upon her daughter Linda to fill in for reels. Marguerite also had Linda practice the movements other dancers were doing incorrectly until Marguerite thought she got it right. Poor Linda.



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Marguerite's dancers also travelled throughout the United States, Canada and Scotland to compete. In 1967, Lynne Erbrick, one of Marguerite's dancers, was the first American to win the Junior World Highland Dancing Championship at Cowal in Scotland.

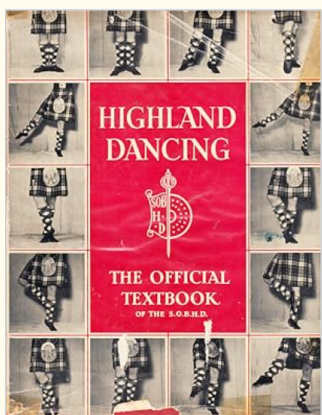


In 1999, Marguerite's School teamed up with the Davidson School of Maryland and the City of Washington Pipe Band. The two groups performed at a gala held at the Kennedy Center Honors, to honor Sir Sean Connery, with a lifetime achievement award. The tribute was to credit Connery, who has strong Scottish roots, on his mother's side.

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Marguerite was a pioneer in the field of highland dancing in a number of ways. She was one of the first teachers to embrace the philosophy of the newly formed Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing. Founded in 1950, the SOBHD had a goal to set quality standards for highland dance technique and competitions. In 1966, Marguerite, along with John and Cathy Hynd, officially became SOBHD judges. They joined Vera Miller and Sheila McMillan Mittig on the adjudicators panel. Marguerite was instrumental in bringing judges over from Scotland not only to judge, but to instruct at workshops, all in order to improve the standard of highland dance in the United States.

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One of these workshops continues to thrive today, bringing together dancers and teachers from the United States, Canada, Scotland, and Bermuda. The Marguerite Reid Memorial Workshop, (MRM), formally known as the Delco Workshop, is held annually each February at the Crowne Plaza in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Originally created as a spin-off from the Delco Highland Games in Devon, Pennsylvania, the workshop was designed for pipers, dancers, and drummers. Today, it serves as a living memorial to Marguerite, carrying forward her enduring passion for Highland dance.



In 1980, highland dance teachers, Anne Andrews, Jeannie Brauns, Margaret Callander, Catherine Fisher, Norine Harmon, Florence Hart, Cathy Hynd, Sheila Mittig, Vera Patterson, and Marguerite Reid all met to form FUSTA, The Federation of United States Teachers and Adjudicators.

Today, ScotDanceUSA is the successor to this organization. Marguerite served as the fourth President of FUSTA. One of the things she was proudest of, was getting FUSTA affiliated with the SOBHD during her term as President.



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**Known for her willingness to embrace new methods and approaches, Marguerite kept her teaching fresh, engaging, and inspirational. She consistently encouraged her dancers to pursue roles as teachers and judges. Today, fourteen of her former dancers are teachers as well as FUSTA/ScotDance members, eight are certified judges, and three have been honored as Hall of Fame recipients, helping to shape the future of Highland Dance. In the late 90's, when Marguerite's granddaughter, Brandie became a teacher, the BATD recognized a milestone in Marguerite's school as they became the first, to have three generations of active teachers under the BATD. All of this is an enduring testament to her influence and legacy.**



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## Marguerite Reid Tartan

In 2014, the Marguerite Reid Tartan was created to honor the memory and legacy of Marguerite Reid. It was designed by her daughter, Linda Reid Tarpy, and Kathleen Park. At first, a sample of the tartan was woven on a four shaft floor loom by Linda's student Sadie Park. The tartan was then finished professionally by DC Dalgleish, in Scotland to the exact standards. It is made of 100% wool, with a dance weight, K7.



The are specific design elements that relate to Mrs. Reid. The darker blue, called Balmoral, was a design in the program used to create the tartan. Once Linda and Katheen saw the name, they knew they had to use it. The Balmoral Festival in Texas was Mrs. Reid's favorite. This festival was very special to her because her dear friend, Diane Krugh, runs the event. The lighter blue and yellow resemble a forget-me-not, signifying eternal memory. The number of threads in the lighter blue is ten, and was chosen to remember Marguerite's son, Brian, who was born on the 10th of November and died far too young. The purple passing through the middle of the blue field is a favorite color of Mrs. Reid's. The overall look of the tartan is a style that Mrs. Reid approved.

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**Marguerite Reid Legacy**



**The theory, Six degrees of Separation, states that everyone in the world is connected to everyone else through a chain of acquaintances. This holds true for Marguerite Reid. The question was asked at the MRM Workshop, "Has anyone here been influenced by Mrs. Reid?" Within minutes, most of the room was up on the floor. Many of these dancers have never even met Mrs. Reid, but they have been influenced by her teachings!**



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## Marguerite Reid Legacy

*What are your Favorite Memories of Mrs.Reid?*

Many former students mentioned their favorite memory of Marguerite was travelling with her, especially as a school. The long car rides, crowded hotel rooms, and getting together to receive those words of encouragement the night before a competition created a sense of belonging that went far beyond dance itself. Mrs. Reid made every experience meaningful, and those shared moments of learning, laughter, and anticipation are memories that most still treasure today.

Lynne remembers returning from Scotland, getting off the plane, and Marguerite saying, "Get your kilt, we're going to the Labor Day Games".

Besides the weekly lessons, others remembered the Grandfather Mountain Games. Tracy recalls Mrs. Reid saying, "How proud she was of me, when I finished with a trophy in the Nationals." Brandie remembers when Marguerite would finish a new choreography and how excited she was to share it with everyone.

Kathleen remembers when she and Sandra talked Mrs. Reid into getting her ears pierced. "We were so nervous she would pass out or faint. We were giggling the whole time! She was always up for an adventure." Sandra remembers, Mrs. Reid running after her with her lipstick in hand! The other girls would warn me, "She's coming Sandra....run!" With a dark red lipstick in hand, Marguerite would grab the dancer and smear it on.

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## Marguerite Reid Legacy

### What are your Favorite Memories of Mrs.Reid?

Finally, the greatest memory most had were her life lessons. Mrs. Reid said, **“You have to look like a winner before you could be one”**. She encouraged her dancers to “never give up” and showed them that hard work pays off, not only in dancing, but also in life.



### What was the best part about dancing with Mrs.Reid?

Dancers would spend a lot of time in Mrs. Reid’s basement during lessons, which often led to a great deal of shenanigans happening. The best was the fun road trips to the competition. Sitting up front was a treat because Marguerite would always have a box of Entenmann’s chocolate chip cookies. The ride was all about the car snacks!

The best part about dancing with Marguerite was simply the lessons and the complete experience she gave her dancers. In her teaching she was determined and focused. She worked tirelessly on technique, timing, and presentation, until things were truly polished. She would break down movements on the barre - - - at least 100 of them! But at the same time, she made dance enjoyable.

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## Marguerite Reid Legacy

*What was the best part about dancing with Mrs. Reid?*

From ceilidhs and parades to competitions and workshops, she created opportunities for us to perform, travel, and grow together. She taught us how to prepare—learning about the judges, the pipers, and the expected tempo—so that we stepped onto the stage confident and ready. Dancing with Mrs. Reid meant being challenged, supported, and inspired all at once. She would work us hard, but it was good. She encouraged us to be the best that we could be.



*What was Mrs. Reid's Favorite Saying or Phrase?*

Many students have memories of Mrs. Reid stating, “Again, again”, “Get your knees back”, “Your other right foot”, “One more time!”, “Pull your waist out of your hips, chin up and smile effortlessly”. We all recall those voices in our head that spoke to us on stage. She also said, “If you don’t like the results, practice harder, and get your revenge on stage”.

Kathleen, Moira, and Heather recall their siblings answering the phone and saying, “The big R is on the phone”. It was part jest and part respect.

Mrs. Reid always signed her cards with a big R.

# R

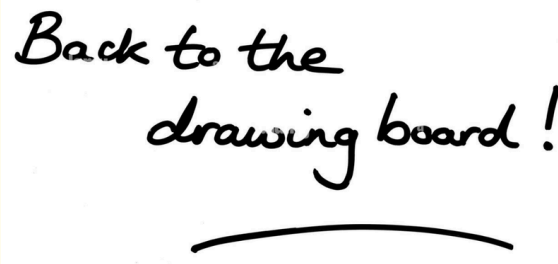
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## Marguerite Reid Legacy

### What was Mrs. Reid's Favorite Saying or Phrase?

Mrs. Reid often said, "Back to the drawing board." After every competition, she would review her notes and already be thinking about how she could help each dancer improve. That phrase stayed with me because it was never about failure—it was about focus, determination, and the belief that improvement is always possible. That simple saying has woven its way through my life, guiding me through parenting, education, and a career where perseverance truly matters. For me, it will always be "back to the drawing board."



Back to the  
drawing board!

### What Do You Think Made Mrs. Reid's Dance School Special?

Mrs. Reid's Dance School was Special because she was so dedicated. She pushed for your very best. Mrs. Reid was the *best of the best* and everyone knew it. She made you believe in yourself. Mrs. Reid taught different generations with families.

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## Marguerite Reid Legacy

### What Do You Think Made Mrs. Reid's Dance School Special?

What made Mrs. Reid's dance school special was the strong sense of community she created. Some of her students became champions, while others did not, but everyone belonged. We were one team, one group of friends, and one dance family. She valued dedication, effort, and growth, not just results. The friendships formed through years of classes, competitions, workshops, and travel were deep and lasting, and that sense of unity set her school apart.

She was the *godmother of dance*, taught most of the teachers, and left a legacy of champions who studied under her. She was special to me, personally because she believed in me, even though I was born turned in with flat feet, she continued to work with me until I made it.



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## **Marguerite Reid Legacy**

*What Do You Think Kept So Many of Mrs. Reid's  
students Involved in Dance?*

So many of Mrs. Reid's students stayed with dance because she instilled a love of dance in her students and made it meaningful and fun while still holding her dancers to a higher standard. She made us feel like we were doing something important. Many students began at a young age and continued into their late teens and early twenties. With a mixture of ages, the older dancers became role models for the younger dancers. Those dancers continued through school, then taking higher level dance exams.



She shared her passion and in turn each dancer became passionate about their dance. Marguerite wanted to see dance grow in the US. She wanted us to take part in a movement that recognized the importance of history and the renowned teachers and judges who came before us. This pushed us to mark our place in Scottish Highland Dance History.

We felt supported, challenged, and connected. The joy of dancing, the friendships built over years, and the sense of belonging she fostered, kept students coming back. Mrs. Reid didn't just teach steps—she created experiences and relationships that made dance a lasting part of our lives. She definitely left her mark!

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## Marguerite Reid Legacy

### Last Thoughts.....

Marguerite was a very large and prominent part of my formative years. If there was a decision to be made, I would go to my parents first, but Marguerite was the next person I would talk to. I am grateful to her for instilling in me - fortitude and a hard work ethic. She knew she was the best, but never acted that way. Simply put, a class act that few could ever follow.



Long after she died, I still had her voice in my head coaching me to lift, point, be sharp and smile. I still live by her many lessons today and feel I owe much of my identity to her. We all had so much love and respect for Mrs. Reid. She was like a second mom to us!

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## Upcoming Competitions Across the Country

### East Region

April 6th- NYC Highland Dance Competition

April 12th- NH Indoor

April 26th- Celtic Festival - Southern Maryland

East Regional Closed Championship & Pre-Premier Competition

May 17th- FairHill Scottish Highland Games

### Midwest Region

April 5th- Spartan Tartan Highland Dance Competition

April 12th- Capital City Spring Dance Competition

April 26th- Cincinnati Indoor

May 17th- Michigan Celtic Classic Spring & Queen Lakes Open Championship

May 24th and 25th- Alma Highland Festival

### Northwest Region

May 17th- Northwest Regional Championship

### Southeast Region

April 5th- Florida Open Championship and Competition

April 12th and 13th- Loch Norman Highland Games and Carolinas Open Championships

May 3rd- Savannah Pre-Premier competition

May 17th- Smoky Mountain Highland Games Dance Competition

May 17th- VA Indoor at Montpelier Celtic Festival

May 17th- St. Louis Scottish Games

### Southwest Region

April 5th- San Antonio Highland Dance Competition

April 26th- Southwest Regional and Pre Premier Competition

May 3rd- Rio Grande Valley Celtic

### West Region

April 5th and 6th- 41st Annual Hawai'ian Highland Festival

April 26th & 27th- Sacramento Valley Championship and Competition

May 24th and 25th- Scottish Fest

**Check ScotDanceUSA for additional details.**

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### Get Featured in our Newsletter

We Want To Spotlight YOU!

The United States has so many amazing Scottish Highland Dance Schools across the country. We'd love to hear from you! Please send information about your dance school so we can feature you in our next newsletter. Share your school's story, achievements, and anything that makes your community special—let's celebrate the rich diversity of Scottish Highland Dance across the country together!

[Click here to add your awesome school!](#)



Send us pictures!

Everyone has a collection of memorable photos from competitions, Burns dinners, festivals, dance classes, and more. Send us your photos—old and new—so we can create a historical archive that showcases our incredible Highland dance legacy!

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or send on Instagram or Facebook