

Posted: Sunday, Nov. 16, 2008

ALL-STARS OF THE ARTS

Rebecca Massey Wiley

“Dance is Part B of what we do here. Part A is to be a good human being.”

She had sworn she never would teach. After eight years in one of the United States' top companies, American Ballet Theatre in New York, Rebecca Massey Wiley returned to her native North Carolina and opened a lingerie store in Kannapolis. Only after business went sour did she turn the store into a ballet school. Piedmont Dance Conservatory – which she leads with her husband, former N.C. Dance Theatre member Daniel Wiley – now has 150 students. She presses them to learn by focusing on their own strengths and weaknesses and to encourage each other rather than compete. All this has led to a discovery. “It wasn't really my mission to be a ballerina. It was my mission to be a teacher. But I had to go through all that to get here – so that I had something to teach.”

Steven Brown

