

Local Author Dances Across America for Top Awards



What does a writer do after years spent in front of a computer, extensive research in India and Fiji, and three successful spiritual and self-help books? Bloomfield Hills, Michigan native and best-selling author Charlene Proctor, Ph.D., says competitive ballroom dancing is the next step toward personal growth and transformation.

“For many years, I taught my readers how to search from within to create their own journey to joy and confidence,” Charlene says. “Little did I know I would start my own journey through ballroom dancing. It’s an amazing art form and a perfect way to express joy. Nowadays, my favorite place to be is anywhere dancing the bolero or the foxtrot. When the music begins, that’s when your heart opens. It’s magical.”

Charlene has been busy this year, having launched a new local television series entitled “*Your Journey to Joy*” for Comcast On Demand/XFINITY and on her website at charleneproctor.com. She is a frequent media guest and the founder of *The Goddess Network*, an on-line community with thousands of supporters, which inspires

women to lead authentic lives with confidence. She also contributed to Lifetime Television’s *The Balancing Act* where she offered spiritual perspective on everyday life to millions of viewers. In between, she traveled all over the country to compete in four styles of dancing and traveled thousands of miles with her instructor and dance partner, Blake Kish of *Birmingham Ballroom*, who shares his expertise with the entire Metro-Detroit community. Blake, a professional dancer for 28 years, and a former American Smooth champion many times over, started teaching Charlene two years ago and decided to take her to a competition in Las Vegas just for fun. “After the first few heats, she was hooked,” he laughs. “After that, I couldn’t get her off the floor. I don’t think I ever will. She’ll be 90 years old and still be competing.”

Together, they set high goals and created an unusual Pro-Am dance partnership. They trained daily in order to compete at nearly 30 events on three national dance circuits. As a result, they became *Triple Crown Champions*, and placed first on the *World Pro-Am DanceSport Series Leaderboard* and *Global DanceSport series*. Among thousands of competitive dancers across the nation, Charlene also ranked first in the Bronze Division Worldwide, and held the highest collective score in the *Dancers Cup Tour*. Winning three ballroom circuits was a dancing grand slam for Charlene, who credits Blake and their work ethic for making ballroom history. In the Pro-Am dance world, no instructor has ever trained a student well enough to win all the major circuits in one season until this year. As driven competitors who developed the stamina to dance over 400 times in a weekend, how do they feel about their combined success? *Woof*, they say.

Now that the final scores are posted for 2012, Charlene reflected on the year of travel, and the commitment it took to becoming a champion. “The secret to winning is to put joy in front of your agenda,” she grins. “Have incredible clarity and passion for whatever you do and you will grow and evolve. That way, anything can be a spiritual expression and the winning comes naturally.”

You can find Charlene and Blake practicing on the dance floor for the new season at *Birmingham Ballroom*, 33680 Woodward Avenue, Birmingham, Michigan @ 248-792-6263. Stop by and find out how you can learn to dance! Follow Charlene’s dance journey at www.charleneproctor.com and www.charleneproctor.com/blog

