



Miami Valley Folk Dancers

Dayton, Ohio

MVFD DANCER OF THE YEAR FOR 2001

The Miami Valley Folk Dancers are proud to nominate Joanne Dombrowski as our Dancer of the Year for 2001. Joanne was born of Polish parents and raised in Dearborn, Michigan. She started dancing early by performing with a Polish cultural group both as a child and as a teenager in her hometown. Upon completion of her higher education, she came to Wright State University as a math instructor. She is currently professor of mathematics at WSU and has served as interim department chair.

When she came to the Miami Valley Folk Dancers in 1981 as a guest, she enjoyed dancing international dances as well as her native Polish dances. After serving her apprenticeship for 20 meetings, she became a member in 1982 and was immediately immersed in the running of the club. Without much fanfare, she has become a very steady, reliable, rock solid influence in our club. During her 18 years of membership, she has served on the club's council for 12 of those years. Her duties on council have included being chairperson twice, vice-chair twice, and secretary three times. She served on the program committee twice and was chair of that committee in 1996. She is the historian in charge of the club pictures and scrapbook. She also chaired an Open House in 1996. She chaired the very important Focus Committee in 1999 that generated ideas to spark interest in folk dance, and she coordinated our club's participation in the World A'Fair in 2000.

The yearly workshops with nationally and internationally known teachers are most important to our club's program. She has chaired three of those workshops and faithfully attended those she did not chair. She chaired an evening Russian workshop with Alexandru David in 1985, a full weekend Israeli Workshop with Yaakov Eden in 1986, and a full weekend Polish Workshop with Ada Dziewanowska in 1993. She has also cheerfully helped on other workshops in various capacities.

However, probably her greatest impact on the group is her teaching. She has taught whenever she has been asked. She has become somewhat of an authority on Balkan and Israeli dances, as these are her preferences. Besides being an excellent teacher, Thursday night dancers look to Joanne to lead many dances because she knows the steps.

Joanne's ability as a dancer extends beyond the MVFD. She has been an integral part of the Zivio Dancers of the South Slavic Club of Dayton, performing with them every year since 1982. Her membership goes beyond dancing. She has served as a choreographer for World A'Fair performances, has researched costume designs, gathered materials, and helped make costumes. Her latest contribution has been the writing of a grant that provided money for the newest set of costumes in that club's collection. She also serves on the board of that club as a vice president.

Joanne has traveled to Yugoslavia twice – in 1988 for a Zivio dance tour and again in 1989 to the Macedonian Republic for a weeklong workshop of Macedonian dances. She attended the Maine Folk Dance Camp on two occasions, and regularly attends workshops in the tri-city area, always learning and then sharing what she has learned.

Her participation in both of these dance clubs contributes to the cultural atmosphere and opportunities in the Dayton area. She is a dancer par excellence and a vital club member.