



Background and History

Recognizing the need for a national body to oversee the continuity of the "Canadian Inter-Provincial Championships", **ScotDance Canada (Scottish Cultural Organization for Traditional Dance in Canada)** was formed in July 1987 in Regina, Saskatchewan with its Constitution receiving formal acceptance in Hamilton, Ontario in July 1988. Since November 1990, ScotDance Canada has been an Affiliated Member of the Royal Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing (RSOBHD) and has acted as the Registration Agent for Canadian dancers and competition organizers participating in the Worldwide Registration System since January 1994. In January 1996 the RSOBHD recognized ScotDance Canada as the principal organization and means of communication with the RSOBHD in Canada.

ScotDance Canada Association was granted Incorporation Status under the Canada Corporations Act by the Minister of Industry Canada on January 24, 1994 and in 1995 received Charitable Status designation due to the work of Loree Martin Vellner (AB). The bylaws were amended and accepted at the Annual General Meeting of July 1997. Further amendments have been made at the 2003, 2004, 2006-2018 Annual General Meetings. The by-laws changed significantly in 2014 as we transition into the new Not-For-Profit (NFP) Act as passed by our Canadian Government.

Over the years ScotDance Canada has prospered under the leadership of nine Presidents: Irene Baird (MB), Loree Martin Vellner (AB), Heather Jolley (BC), Anne Sutherland (ON), Christa Mackie (ON), Marilyn Wright (ON), Peter Archibald (BC), Bill Troock (AB) and Cheryl Rafter (BC).

Independent Membership has been awarded to the six founding members of ScotDance Canada: Adeline Duncan of Victoria, BC (1991); Irene Baird of Winnipeg, MB (1993); Gail Danysk of Calgary, AB (1994); Heather Jolley of Burnaby, BC, Sandra Bald Jones of Hamilton, ON, and Donna Jean Ostrander (see Macdonald) of Ottawa, ON (1995); Loree Vellner of Red Deer, AB (1998); Anne Sutherland of London, ON and Bill Troock of Edmonton, AB (2009); Christa Mackie of Oakville, ON (2010); Peter Archibald of North Vancouver, BC (2011); Deborah Wardrope of Mississauga, ON (2013); Barb Yorke of Kensington, PEI (2014) and Cheryl Rafter of Vancouver, BC (2015).

A new class of Emeritus Membership was passed in 2010 awarded to any ScotDance Canada Independent Member upon retirement or death. Adeline Duncan was awarded the first Emeritus membership (2009), followed by Donna Jean Ostrander, Gail Danysk and Loree Martin Vellner (2011), Sandra Bald Jones (2012), Donna Cooper (2021), and Irene Baird (2022).

Three Independent Members have received the prestigious Atholl Clasp award, presented by the RSOBHD. The award is given to individuals within the dancing community who have served their sport extremely well and who have dedicated their life to Highland Dancing. Adeline Duncan (BC) received the award in 2004, Heather Jolley (BC) in 2006 and Sandra Bald Jones (ON) in 2010.

Linda Rankin of Scotland, was approved by the RSOBHD as our delegate in September 1990. She attended her first meeting representing ScotDance Canada on November 18th, 1990 and was the Head Delegate for ScotDance Canada for 22 years. In November of 2012, Linda was elected as Vice President of the RSOBHD and therefore retired as our head delegate. Rachel McLagan was named our sole delegate. September 2013 Lindsay Reid attended her first meeting as a full delegate for ScotDance Canada, and in March 2016, Jacqueline Aird was named a delegate and represented ScotDance Canada at her first RSOBHD Meeting. Rachel, Lindsay and Jacqueline remain today as our current delegates representing the voice of ScotDance Canada at meetings of the RSOBHD when we are not able to send a representative. Two meetings where ScotDance Canada does send representatives to Board meetings held in Scotland, are at the Liaison meeting in August and Annual General Meeting in November.

ScotDance Canada created a Class C Honorary Membership category within our bylaws, to honour a prominent person interested in promoting the aims of ScotDance Canada. Such person is eligible to attend all General Meetings of the Association but is not entitled to the privileges of voting, of holding Office or of having any interest in the property of the Association. In 2006 and 2009, ScotDance Canada appointed Shendl Russell and Linda Rankin respectively, to the title of Class C Honorary Member.

In 1992 ScotDance Canada established the "James L. McKenzie Memorial Fund" scholarship in memory of James L. McKenzie of Aberdeen, Scotland. Its purpose is to award funds to deserving recipients in Canada for Highland Dancing enhancement. ScotDance Canada's Scholarship Committee oversees these two scholarships, represented by one ScotDance Canada member from each of the Affiliate provinces. In 2019 a scholarship for recipients holding Examining Body professional status and post-secondary education aspirations was approved by the Board of Directors in memory of Loree Martin Vellner, past President, Independent Member and Emeritus Member. Both scholarships are adjudicated by our two Honorary Members, Shendl Russell and Linda Rankin.

Spearheaded in 2008-2009 by Deborah Wardrope (ON), who currently oversees ScotDance Canada's Education and Development Committee, the development of an Education Centre on the ScotDance Canada website came to fruition. The focus of this committee is to provide our Professional members with up-to-date information on technique and other relevant highland dancing topics.

Changes were made to the representation of ScotDance Canada's Board of Directors in 2010, providing for one individual to represent their respective memberships within each of the 9 provinces.

ScotDance Canada's Risk Management Program was introduced in 2010 with a focus on levels of screening of ScotDance Canada's professional members, pipers and volunteers in accordance with child protection policies in its capacity of working with the vulnerable sector.

In 2011, Deborah Wardrope (ON) introduced a document outlining ideas around a National Dance Championship (currently entitled "Premierships") to spotlight the traditional Scottish National dances, coupled with the intent to maintain the dancer base at the competitive level. As of 2018, the RSOBHD oversees National Premiership events, adopting ScotDance Canada's previously-set rules.

In 2012, the Board of Directors approved a change to the name of our national championship from the Canadian Inter-Provincial Championships to the Canadian Championships. The event in Montreal 2013 was the inaugural event for the new Canadian Championships title, which also included a new 21 Years and Over age group.

In 2019 at the Moncton SDCCS event, the first meeting of ScotDance Canada's Young Professionals took place, with Nicole Odo as Chairperson leading the group of young professionals in discussions around challenges and opportunities within our younger professional community. This cohesive group has organized subsequent online educational sessions in 2020 focusing on various topics facing younger professionals in the development of their dance studio business as well as marketing and maintaining dance student numbers.

In March 2020, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, our National SDCCS event scheduled for Kamloops, BC was cancelled. Cheryl Rafter, ScotDance Canada President, convened an Emergency Task Force Committee consisting of ScotDance Canada's current Office Bearers, Cheryl Rafter, President; Jennifer Worthen, Vice-president; Elizabeth McCorkell, Secretary; Mary Munro, Treasurer; and 4 Independent Members, consisting of one past Secretary and three past Presidents (Deborah Wardrope, Anne Sutherland, Peter Archibald and Bill Troock respectively) to oversee various decisions requiring immediate attention around events and other subject-matter affected by the pandemic within the Canadian highland dancing landscape. The Task Force augmented the Committee with two medical doctors, Dr. Nicole Boutilier and Dr. Jennifer Seaman who provided health and safety protocol guidance.

As the pandemic took hold, at the request of the Emergency Task Force, all ScotDance Canada sanctioned events were cancelled indefinitely. The Task Force provided regular advisories around future cancellations of our in-person events for our Highland dancing community as we navigated our way through the on-going pandemic. The Canadian Highland dancing community responded with creative social media photo and video performance opportunities and challenges to bridge the gap from our competitive events being cancelled to when we might return to the competitive stage. We are very proud of our dance community for supporting each other in the difficult times we all faced.

As a charitable organization, we turned our focus from the competitive dance arena to one of 'giving back'. Bill Troock presented an idea to give back to those in need during the pandemic. A national fund-raiser was organized in August 2020 to raise money for Food Banks Canada and the Kids Help Phone by way of an online dance-a-thon whereby Highland dancers submitted videos and competed in teams to raise funds, with a goal to raise \$30,000, split equally between these two charities. Cheryl Rafter spearheaded the fundraiser using the tagline, "we can achieve this goal together even though we are apart" with support from the Board of Directors, Independent Members, dancers, parents, competition organizers and businesses. As an organization, we are very proud to have surpassed our goal and raised \$50,000, providing \$25,000 to each of the two charities.

In January 2020, ScotDance Canada's logo was refreshed. Jane Rowlands, designer of the 2014 and 2017 SDCCS medals, updated the dancer and maple leaf, creating a more stylized and energetic appearance. Jane also updated the provincial Affiliate logos to align with ScotDance Canada's logo. In addition, Jane created a branding standards document to ensure unified branding within our organization as well as for media, print and other marketing initiatives.

The SDCCS event scheduled for Ottawa in 2021 was subsequently cancelled. October 1, 2021 saw the gradual reopening of competitive events in Canada. The Task Force was suspended October 1, 2021 with the Risk Management Committee taking on the oversight of health and safety protocols and recommendations at our sanctioned events. We are very proud of our dance community for supporting each other in the difficult times we all faced.

In 2022, the Board of Directors approved a new design for the Canadian Championships and ScotDance Canada Open Championships medals, debuted at the SDCCS 2022 event in Regina. Jane Rowlands designed the new ScotDance Canada Open Championships medal. Jane also collaborated with Cheryl Rafter on the Canadian Championships medal design to incorporate symbols and words to depict ScotDance Canada's strength and unity to uphold our core values of duty of care in providing an environment of inclusivity, diversity, equality and growth for all participants in our highland dancing community.

The SDCCS event returned to Regina in 2022 after a two year hiatus due to the pandemic.

In keeping with ScotDance Canada's vision to promote and foster highland dancing in Canada through competitions, education and professional development, we are continually seeking new initiatives to promote growth amongst our professional members, dancers, and the highland dancing community at large. We are proactive in our efforts to better the community of highland dancing in Canada both in a duty of care capacity as well as adopting marketing policies to meet our vision for growth of this time-honoured cultural art form and sport.