

*Honorary Life Member*  
*ScotDance Ontario*  
*May 2004*



**Colleen Rintamaki - Pickering, Ontario**

August 27, 2005 hundreds witnessed the 10<sup>th</sup> World Championship title attributed to Ontario's own Colleen Rintamaki – a decade of accomplishments and accolades! Now 25-years old, Canadian Highland dancer, Colleen Rintamaki from Pickering, Ontario won the prestigious SOBHD Adult World Highland Dancing Championship at the Cowal Highland Gathering, Scotland for the 6th time! Making this accomplishment just that bit more staggering is the fact that Colleen Rintamaki has won at Cowal almost every year she has competed. She first won the Juvenile World Championship in 1995. She repeated this in 1996 and then went on to win two World Junior Wins in 1997 and '98. Moving into the Adult section in '99 she began her total domination of the Adult World Championship, breaking all records since the World Championships began in 1948. In 2002 she set a new record for most successive wins, won again in 2003 and after 1 year off in 2004, she came back to win her 6<sup>th</sup> Adult World title in 2005. Her performances over the years have been stellar and the record she has set will undoubtedly stand for a long, long time, -likely forever!

Apart from Highland, Colleen has also studied ballet, modern dance, hip-hop, jazz and Irish Step dancing. "I love the Highland because of the intricate technique", says Colleen. "When

you dance there is so much to think about, so much going through your head the whole time. I especially like the power and stamina that Highland Dances demand. I like the National dances, but I "LOVE" to do the leaps and high cuts! It's true with other forms of dance you can adjust the dance to your body, but in Highland you have to adjust your body to the dance and you have to have stamina, otherwise it just doesn't happen".

Colleen's long-term goal "was to continue to strive to be a better dancer, to teach and eventually judge and to try and bring Highland into the public eye, recognizing it for both the sport and dance form that it is". Colleen has done well on reaching her goals and has truly been a great Ambassador to Ontario and Canada while continuing to work diligently for her art/sport. She is both fortunate and very appreciative of the expert training and guidance she has received from her devoted instructor and friend, **Joy Allen Tolev, Director of the Joy Allen School of Dance in Toronto** who has been instructing Colleen for the past 19 years. Colleen is also very grateful to have the love and support of her family, and many friends she has made over the years. In her own quiet and gracious way she has made a significant difference and been highly instrumental in raising the bar, as it would, for highland dancing in Canada and around the globe.

Having won over 155 Highland Dance championship titles throughout Canada, the USA and Great Britain, Some of her more notable winnings include:

**10 time World Champion – 1995 – 2005**

**11 time current Commonwealth Champion- 1991,1993 – 1999, 2001 – 2003**

**15 time consecutive and current Ontario - 1989 – 2003**

**14 time consecutive Canadian Champion - 1989 – 2002**

**9 time North American Champion, 1995 – 2005**

**Colleen's accolades don't stop there. Apart from her many prestigious wins;**

- 1995** - Colleen was the subject of the BBC Documentary "That Fling Thing" which has Aired frequently throughout Britain
- 1997** – Chosen by the Ontario Government Office of Protocol to sit at the Head Table with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II at a Youth Achievement Luncheon During a visit to Ontario.
- 1998** – A winner of the YTV Achievement Award for She performed on National TV at the evening of awards ceremony.
- 1998** – Performed for Prime Minister Jean Chretien with her own back up dance troupe, "Celtic connection" (named by Rick Campenelli, the VJ for Much Music who M.C.'d the event.)
- 1999** – Received the Arts & Culture Award from her home city of Pickering.
- 1999** – Choreographed and performed with "Celtic Connection: and "ARTE Flamenco" in "Wild Thunder", a show fusing Spanish and Celtic Music and dance.
- 2000** – Was a guest instructor at the British Association of Teachers of Dance Millennium Conference held in Bournemouth, England.
- 2000** – Was the motivational speaker at the USIR Championships held in Philadelphia
- 2001** – Along with her teacher, Joy Tolev, Colleen was invited to do a whirlwind workshop and performance tour of New Zealand. (was on 11 planes in 10 days!)

In addition to competitions, since 1996 she has performed regularly with the Professional Scottish Dance Co. of Canada under the direction of Sandra Bald Jones. From 1996-97 Colleen was one of the 7 original and youngest member of "Celtic Accent" a performing group under the direction of Ann Milne Armstrong, which featured all-world champion dancers at that time. Colleen has traveled with the world-renowned 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser Pipe Band throughout Ontario, Chicago and Belfast, Ireland. As well as competing throughout the year and being a member of both dance companies, she has also performed with her own dance school at private and community functions, which have included the Calgary Stampede, McKenzie House, and the Premier showing of the movie, ROB ROY".

Formerly an honour student and in the High Performance Athlete Program at Dunbarton High School, Colleen went on to complete her degree at the University of Toronto in 2004. At age 17, she formed the Colleen Rintamaki School of Dance and now enjoys teaching approx. 40 children. As a result of her personal expertise in dance, coupled with the encouragement she is able to instill in others, Colleen is a popular choice as a guest instructor at many dance workshops throughout Canada and the United States and feels that she will always be involved in Highland Dancing in some sense. Quite a resume for one so young, and a very full and busy life.

With this, Colleen's 10<sup>th</sup> World Title, she has set records both at home and abroad that will undoubtedly remain untouched for a very long time to come. It is wonderful that people take the time to not only recognize the dancers but also applaud their teachers and their parents – the entire support team. It is not enough to just be a big winner - the dancers that we truly admire are those who have worked to develop their talent and also respect their competitors, win, lose or draw. Graciousness and good sportsmanship are every bit the components of a winning dancer as is good technique. Colleen Rintamaki is synonymous with the traits of a true Champion. ScotDance Ontario is extremely proud and pleased to highlight the Ontario Gala evening with a performance by and a presentation to Colleen and extend best wishes to her for whatever and wherever life leads her.