

The Studio is the official academy of Santa Cruz Ballet Theatre
Robert Kelley and Diane Cypher, Directors | Sandy Nelson, Academy Registrar

A TRIBUTE TO BARBARA CROCKETT

Barbara Crockett is our “Ballet Mother”. Yes, that means if you are a student at The Studio, she is your “Ballet Grandmother”. She trained Diane Cypher from the age of 8 onward and helped Robert Kelley begin his professional career both as dancer and as a choreographer. She is the last living Founding Director of Regional Dance America/Pacific, which she and a group of colleagues established over 50 years ago.

Barbara began her ballet training in the central California valley and quickly showed promise. She went to San Francisco Ballet School to further her training and joined the company while still a teenager. San Francisco Ballet presented the first full length “Swan Lake” in the United States, and in it she danced one of her favorite roles: a Cygnet in Act II (one of the four little swans). After several years of dancing in the company, she and her husband



Deane moved to Sacramento when he retired from dancing. They decided the town would be a good place to raise a family, and that is what they did. They founded the Sacramento Ballet over 60 years ago and Barbara continued dancing as a principal in the company for many years. Deane passed away and left Barbara with 2 daughters (dancing daughters!) and the company to direct. She persisted and in the mid-eighties the company went fully professional, realizing the dream she and Deane had together. At that time, Barbara retired from directing the company, but she continued to teach and run her school, Crockett Dance Studio, for many successful years.

Barbara only recently retired from teaching at the age of 96. She continues to be artistic advisor to the RDA company directed by her daughter and son-in-law, recently renamed Sac Civic Ballet. At the 50th RDA/P Festival in 2015 their company performed a piece choreographed by her many years ago, “L’Ile Enchantée”. She is a Pacific Region treasure. Without her guidance, inspiration and tireless efforts, the region would not be where it is today: continuing on in her footsteps after more than 50 years.

Brava, Barbara!

Barbara as a young dancer, above in “And Now the Brides” and on the right in what we assume is “Don Quixote”. At left, Barbara proves that she has a sense of humor, photographed with Elvis impersonator at her 90th birthday in Las Vegas, fall 2011.

