



Excellence in Teaching Award Winners

Irish Dancing Magazine Announces 2021 Award

Recipients

30th July 2021 - Irish Dancing Magazine is proud to announce the award-winning recipients of the 2021 Irish Dancing Teacher Awards. The global search recognizes excellence in teaching by honoring extraordinary dance teachers.

In the spring of 2021, Irish Dancing Magazine opened the nomination process to dancers, parents, and industry professionals to nominate dance teachers with qualities that reflect a standard of excellence that goes beyond competitive results.

After an extensive review of hundreds of nominations, Irish Dancing Magazine narrowed the field to 23 extraordinary teachers. The impressive list includes 17 individuals and three, two-person teaching teams. The global list of recipients includes dance teachers in Australia, Canada, Ireland, Romania, the UK, and America.

Frances McGahan, of the [McGahan Lees Irish Dance Academy](#) in the UK, was honored and humbled to learn she received multiple nominations and has been selected as one of this year's award recipients. "It is wonderful that all the of work both myself and my fellow teachers has been recognised during an extremely challenging period for everyone," shared Frances upon reflecting on the meaning of this award.

One of the common denominators between all the recipients is their dedication to their dancers, viewing them more than just a customer, but as an important member of their dance school. A strong family atmosphere, a commitment to their local community and caring about each dancer both on and off the stage rang through in many nominations.

Nominations relayed stories such as one dance teacher helping a dancer learn how to cope with anxiety to another teacher providing vital support to a dancer while mourning the loss of a close family member. Others emphasized unique programs that teachers have in play such as the "Sabo Stars" class offered by award recipient Jackie Sabo-Metzinger of the [Sabo School of Irish Dance](#) in Pennsylvania.

“My daughter Colleen has Down Syndrome and has been dancing with Jackie for a little over two years in her beginner classes. Jackie began a Sabo Stars class, a special needs class, that has been amazing and many of the champion dancers help with this class. Jackie has made her school a model of inclusion for the Irish Dance community,” shared dance mum Jeanne Knepper.

Another common theme amongst nominations were teachers who worked to bring out the best in each dancer, regardless of ability. It is apparent the dancer, teacher relationship amongst the teachers selected is one of trust and respect.

Many nominations included comments from parents who value the life lessons their children have learned from being part of a supportive dance family. Award recipient Margaret Cleary of [Cleary Irish Dance](#) in Burbank, California received many such comments from parents. After winning the award for Teaching Excellence along with her daughter Katie Dean TCRG, Margaret shared her philosophy about her approach to teaching and running her studio.

“Good attitude, discipline, loyalty and friendships extend beyond the classroom. We are fortunate to have a very supportive parent and family base that work together to make the program work. It is our duty to make each dancer the very best they can be, and our families trust that everything we do is in the best interest of the dancer. Without that trust, there would be no program.”

Congratulations to the 2021 Excellence in Teaching, Global Award Recipients including:

Australia & Canada:

Kate Bilton TCRG, Victorian Irish Dance Academy, CLRG, Victoria, Australia

Casey Costello TCRG, Costello School of Irish Dance, CLRG, Quebec, Canada



Ireland

Aisling McCabe TCRG & David McCabe TCRG, Caba Academy, CLRG, Dublin

Lori Hall ADCRG & Joey Comerford, MA Irish Dance, Dance Hall Academy, CLRG, Dublin

Orlagh Carty TCRG, Orlagh Carty School of Irish Dance, An Comhdhail, Dublin



Romania

Mara Cernat TCRG, STEYsha School of Irish Dance, CLRG



England

Annie Flanagan TCRG, Flanagan's School of Irish Dance, WIDA

Frances McGahan ADCRG/BG, McGahan Lees Irish Dance Academy, CLRG

Justine Ward Mallinson ADCRG, Ward Mallinson Dance School, CLRG



California, USA

Margaret Cleary SDCRG & Katie Dean TCRG, Cleary Irish Dance, CLRG

Michael Dillon ADCRG/BG, Michael Dillon School of Irish Dancing, CLRG

Patricia Rose Toy TCRG, Rose Academy of Irish Dance, CLRG



Kentucky & Massachusetts, USA

Megan Moloney TMRF, Bluegrass Ceili Academy, CLRG, Kentucky

Louise McHale TCRG, McHale School of Irish Dance, RTN/CRDM, Massachusetts

Bridget Murphy, TCRG, Murphy Academy of Irish Dance, CLRG, Massachusetts



New Hampshire & New Jersey, USA

Anne Murray MacRitchie TCRG, Murray Academy, CLRG, New Hampshire

Lexa Hickey ADCRG, An Clar School of Irish Dance, CLRG, New Jersey

Deirdre O'Mara TMRF, Scoil Rince Saoirse, CLRG, New Jersey



Pennsylvania & Oregon, USA

**Jaqueline Sabo-Metzinger TCRG,
Sabo School of Irish Dance, An
Comhdhail, Pennsylvania**

**Sinead Yeates TCRG, Yeates
Academy CLRG, Oregon**



Recipients will each receive a commemorative plaque for their dance studios as well as a marketing program compliments of Irish Dancing Magazine. The Irish Dancing Teacher Awards were in part made possible by [Harlequin Floors](#) and [Beat Feis Music App](#), key sponsors of the 2021 awards.

Read more about these award recipients in more detail inside the pages of Irish Dancing Magazine. Also, coming up in the September issue we reveal our 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award Winner! Don't miss it! Subscribe to the print magazine now at [Irish Dancing Magazine's shop](#).