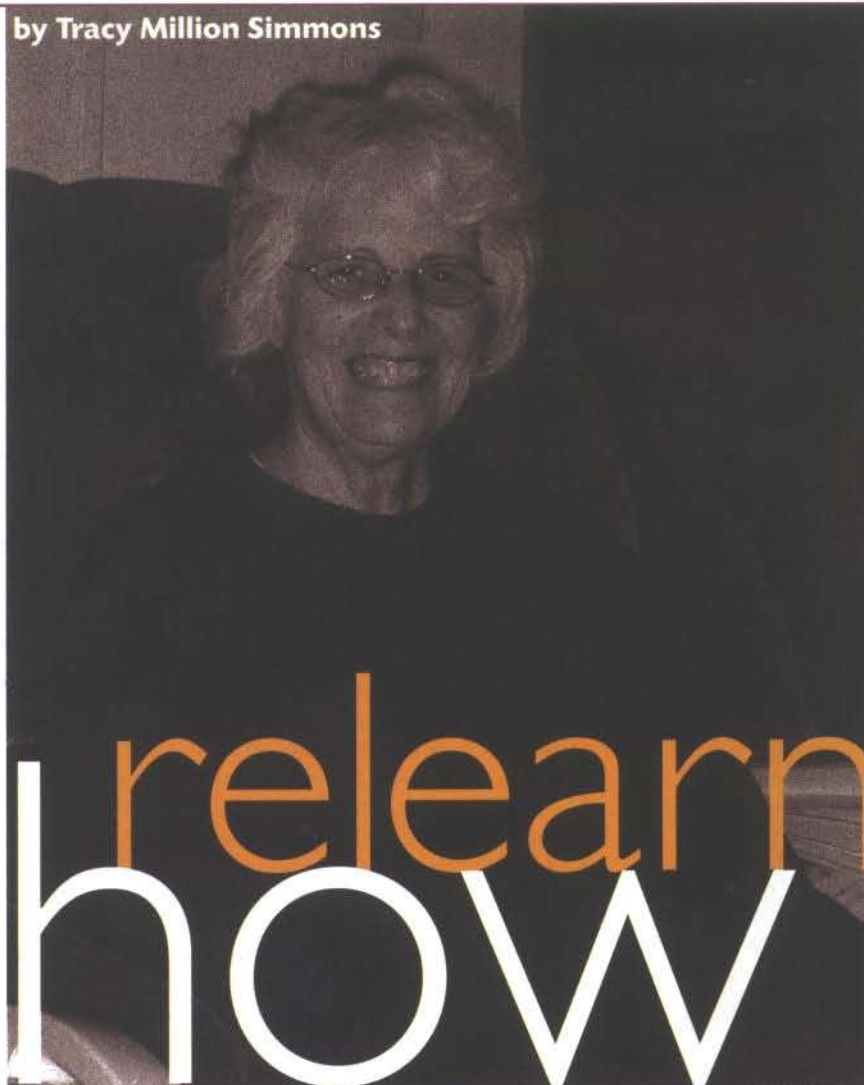


by Tracy Million Simmons



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NATHALEE SHRIVER

“YOU’RE NEVER GOING TO LEARN IT ALL. SO YOU JUST KEEP TRYING. THAT’S WHAT DANCE IS ALL ABOUT. —NATHALEE SHRIVER”

relearning how to move

Nathalee Shriver teaches elderly and movement-impaired students to dance—and enjoy life again.

For more than 50 years, Nathalee “Nat” Shriver has been teaching dance classes of one form or another. While her daughter teaches dance to children in Dodge City, Kansas, Shriver teaches dance, and now yoga, to the adults of this rural town. Shriver’s students, some of whom danced as kids, are now learning the basics that they never had the chance to learn, like the difference between a plié and a relevé.

Shriver began dancing as a child in Newton, KS. Her first dance teacher was

Hildegard Lewis, a wheelchair-bound former dancer who, she says, “told a story and painted a picture in my mind so that I could hear and see exactly what she wanted.” Lewis ignited a passion for movement that still dances in Shriver’s sparkling blue eyes as she talks about her students, past and present. “When I was in the fifth grade, I made up my mind that I wanted to be a dance teacher just like Hildegard Lewis. I never strayed from that. I knew that’s what I wanted, and that’s what I pursued.”

When she moved to Salina, KS at the age of 12, her skill in dance already

exceeded that of the local teachers and she began teaching dance herself. After graduating from high school, she moved to Denver to study dance and the art of teaching. Along the way, Shriver took every opportunity to study with and teach alongside others. She continues this practice to this day, expanding her knowledge of yoga and other disciplines of the body.

Enthusiasm radiates from Shriver when she discusses dance. Whether it’s ballet, tap, jazz, belly dance or yoga, movement is a quest, rather than a goal. “It’s just endless,” she says, “You’re