

# **History of National Ballroom Dance Week™**

## **1989:**

In That great, creative Big Apple of it all, a number of New Yorkers led by a dedicated dynamo of action, Mary Helen McSweeney, put together a "Ballroom Week," April 21st to the 28th. The week was to bring ALL of the dancing community together and present Ballroom Dancing at its best to the public. With Dulaine and Marceau's fabulous show as an "anchor," these intrepid NYC members of the Greater New York Chapter of USABDA bonded with studios, pros, the city government and caused dancing everywhere in the city-from libraries to ferry boats, from studios to public and company halls. The media loved it and relished covering it. A concept had been put into place.

## **1990, September 14-21**

The editors of the major dance publications in the United States, Doris Pease of Dancing USA, Cay Cannon of Dance Action International and Bob Meyer/Joan Adams of Amateur Dancers got together, and in consensus, agreed to publish the proposition of the whole country having a NATIONAL BALLROOM DANCE WEEK™ (NBDW™) with the Amateurs, the Pros, the Studios, the governments, vendors and other interested parties and sectors. They decided to have a full week with "anchor events" at each end of the week. Creative chapters solicited and obtained "proclamations" from Mayors, Governors and (through the efforts of then USABDA president Peter Pover) even President George Bush along with a picture of the President and Mrs. Bush dancing. Studios hosted "open-door" weeks. Thousands danced.

## **1991, September 13-22**

NBDW™ saw a great leap forward in this year. The "week" was extended to ten days so that all localities would have two really full "anchor weekends." Frances Lundy of Huntsville AL and Doris Pease of MN were in the forefront to get Gubernatorial proclamations from nearly every state in the union. Diane Saia's (Western MA) media coverage efforts and results were astounding; Sharon Wayne's (Richmond VA) daylong seminars for kids, with "killer" video, was awesome; Pinky O'Neil's (Reston VA) public

TV video was shown throughout the country; Sergio Coelho (DE) generated proclamations from practically everyone living in Delaware; the public danced in rotundas, malls, ferries, studios, libraries, etc., etc. National media started to pick up on NBDW. Emphasis was on "Everyone Dance-at least a waltz or a chacha."

## **1992. September 11-20**

Over a million people attended the Eastern State Expo in Springfield IL, the local USABDA Chapter was an active participant and promoted dancing, dancing, dancing. Janis Kenyon of IL volunteered to be the "central" for information for NBDW. A telephone number, 800-332-NBDW, funded by USABDA, was set up to take requests for information and material, hundreds of calls were handled. Frances Stein (Southern Tier NY) was responsible for a very successful fundraiser and emphasized the inclusion of Middle Schools, resulting in many young people being introduced to BRD. Richmond again conducted a very successful "Youth Seminar." Efforts were made to have a NBDW™ theme song.

## **1993, September 10-19**

MN kicked off NBDW™ with a successful extravaganza in the World Trade Center Atrium. In MD Bobby Fries, with amateur dancers, repeated one of the most extraordinary "studios weeks" using theme tracks. This involved "dancing" movies, videos, live bands, etc., all of which highlighted a theme night-Latin, modern, whatever-with highest level of success. The various parties in NBDW™-amateurs, pros, studios, media and municipalities continued to work in concert for the over-all good of dancing during the week. Many more locations, now in the hundreds, participated in NBDW™ making it one of the most universal activities for Ballroom Dancing in America. Most active areas utilize every day in a full week of dancing as does Boston, Richmond, Minneapolis and other localities.

## **And 1994 and 1995 and 1996 and 1997 and on and on . .**

The flow and tempo of NBDW™ has developed through experience in many of the locations. The persons there have found successful areas of involvement-showing of "dancing" movies and videos, live bands, theme nights, exhibitions in shopping malls, presentations in businesses, libraries, streets, ferryboats, mountain tops, etc. An absolutely vital element of a

successful NBDW™ is that the various parties-amateurs, pros, studios, media and municipalities-work in peer-level concert for the over-all good of dancing during the week. There cannot be a dominant force in the week's events because if there is, self-vested interests come to the top and nullify success. If all work is performed in good-spirited mutual effort, you will find that NBDW™ can and will be the most effective method of enjoying yourself and presenting ballroom dancing to large numbers of the general public.

Source: [www.usadance.org](http://www.usadance.org).