

The 2010 Chicago Pilates Intensive

By Carl Corry



Jay Grimes

There is a clear and unique camaraderie among people who practice and teach the Pilates Method. The relationship among instructors is vital to ongoing personal growth and continued elevation of our teaching skills. Dana Santi of Chicago, one of the new leaders in our field, is masterful in fostering these kinds of relationships and advancing our profession.

I first met Dana in 1998 when I was training to be a teacher while studying with Juanita Lopez. At that time Dana was the manager of the training center in downtown Chicago. She was a natural at organization even then, and was involved in organizing the first Chicago Pilates convention back in 2000. Since then she has grown into a successful business owner, entrepreneur and mother of two. Owner of [The Pilates Core](#) in suburban LaGrange, Dana multitasks so fluidly that you don't even realize just how many things are being accomplished. A terrific problem solver, she has been able to bring incredible talents together for the benefit of many. It is no easy feat to bring together some of the finest talent in Pilates today, and she's done that, offering an enormous wealth of knowledge at the May 2010 Chicago Pilates Intensive with Jay Grimes, Kathryn Ross-Nash, Peter Fiasca, Mejo Wiggin and Brooke Siler.

This knowledge is the result of direct contact and training with Romana Kryzanowska, who was charged with upholding the work of Joseph Pilates. Dana also shares in this teaching tradition, as she was certified by Romana in 1998 after studying under the direction of Juanita Lopez. In 2004 Dana met and studied with Jay Grimes, a meeting she says "changed my life."

The combined hours that these teachers have accumulated in both training and teaching are staggering. They all taught at the April 2009 Chicago Intensive and have come back to Chicago without question, in part, because Dana's intensives run like clockwork. Since integrity is so important, that makes their job that much easier. Guest teachers love that!

The Chicago area has always had a very strong Pilates work ethic, turning out amazing teachers and practitioners alike. This strong work ethic is due in large part to the incredible skills of Juanita, who has trained more highly competent teachers in Chicago than anyone.

It is the integrity with which she approaches this work that is Juanita's greatest gift. She makes teachers understand how important it is to not just be a good teacher, but a great one. She believes that teachers must understand the basic fundamentals of the method before anything else. Whenever we were injured she would say, "Go do a basic mat you'll be fine." She has given us a historical Pilates perspective as well.

It is important to know that Juanita has spent decades with our dearly loved Romana, the guiding inspiration for all of the high-level teachers that Juanita has trained. All teachers who know Romana believe that the very heart of the Pilates Method resides in her. Her deep love for the work is inescapable and all of us feel it and all of us know it to be true. Romana has regularly come to Chicago to teach and has certified a whole generation of teachers.

I was privileged to have a 20-year career as a dancer with the Joffrey Ballet in New York, before the company moved to Chicago. Given my background in dance, I believe that great attention should be paid to form, alignment, and posture. This is not a new idea, but it's one that I personally feel is critical to getting really deep into the musculature and performing the exercises to the very best of a person's ability. My wife Elise was a former member of George Balanchine's New York City Ballet. Her Pilates emphasis is on strong precision movement. When I work with Elise's clients it is evident that they have wonderful precision in their exercise movement. They know how to work through the exercises. Romana certified Elise and I in 2000. We both feel a special connection with Romana and Juanita because they were both professional dancers as well.

From Romana Kryzanowska to Juanita Lopez to Dana Santi, the tradition of Joseph Pilates lives on and thrives in Chicago.

The 2010 Chicago Pilates Intensive will be held May 14-16, 2010 at The William Tell Holiday Inn, Countryside-LaGrange. All participants will be scheduled into classes that focus on the Reformer, the Cadillac, Mat and Barrels, and Chairs. These classes will be taught by Jay Grimes, Brooke Siler, Kathryn Ross-Nash, Peter Fiasca, Mejo Wiggin and Dana Santi. Registrations received by April 1 will be discounted \$100. For more information, please email The Pilates Core at pilatescore@gmail.com.



About the Author: Mr. Corry enjoyed a 20-year career with the Joffrey Ballet in New York City, starting as a scholarship student and rising to Assistant Ballet Master between 1975 and 1995. During his years with the Joffrey he studied ballet with Maestro Vincenzo Celli, Robert Joffrey, Nina Stroganova, and Margot Fonteyn. In 1998 Mr. Corry began the [certification](#) program for Pilates with Juanita Lopez at the Pilates Studio of the Midwest in Chicago while teaching ballet locally. During the 600 hour program Mr. Corry was offered full time employment from the Pilates Studio of the Midwest, (1999-2000). In the fall of 2000 he and his wife Elise launched their own studio, [Pilates Fitness Inc.](#)