



IDTA

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spotlight on...

MARCUS HILTON MBE AND KAREN HILTON MBE – IDTA PATRONS



To become a world champion is the dream of many but Marcus and Karen Hilton have done it 16 times!

Though these successful champion dancers have busy lives, being in demand throughout the world, they are never too busy to attend IDTA functions. The IDTA is indeed lucky in having Patrons who are active in supporting the Association and its work.

The premiere professional dance couple Karen Hilton, MBE and Marcus Hilton, MBE are noted for competing in the disciplines of Ballroom and Latin American firstly at amateur and then professional level. Representing Great Britain, they have held a large number of championship titles, including the World Professional Ballroom Championship which they have won nine times.

They first competed together in amateur dance competitions in 1978, achieving Championship titles in the UK for Latin American dance. They also competed in international events, representing Great Britain. The Hiltons became a professional dance couple in 1983,



winning their first professional title at the British Rising Star Championship. The couple married in 1986 and continued to dance professionally whilst giving demonstrations, teaching, lecturing and judging. In June 1997, both Karen and Marcus were awarded Membership of the Order of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. They competed professionally until their retirement in 1999, winning numerous Championship titles. Today they are in great demand internationally as dance teachers, lecturers and competition judges.

Dance International asked the charming couple:

When and where did you start dancing?

Marcus: I started dancing at the age of 8 at the Turners School of dancing in Rochdale Lancashire.

Karen: I started dancing Ballet at the Mary Leonard Ballet School in Maghull, Liverpool.

When did you first meet each other?

In about 1974 when we first danced against each other but were boyfriend and girlfriend in a very young sort of way. We started dancing together in 1978 and everything developed from there.

How many hours a day did you practice?

We practiced approximately 6 hours per day

How important is it for would be champions to have professional training?

You can dance and practice and compete all you want but you always need a third eye to let you know when you are doing things right or wrong!



Marcus and Karen in Moscow, 2018

What encouraged you to move from the amateur status to professional and how challenging was it?

We felt, and were advised, that we had achieved the maximum and pinnacle of our career as Amateurs. We felt we had a clean slate but we knew we had to perform to the highest of standards to achieve our total ambitions.

To achieve success in dancing requires commitment - but do you also need to be a bit obsessive and a perfectionist?

We are both very competitive in all that we do, and we feel that whatever we do in life or dance to achieve perfection we need to be very obsessive!

What aspects of training do you think teachers should focus on most?

Many things but of course in the forefront of our minds we think of technique, helping others to gain confidence in all that they do and really just to make them look and feel better!

We are both very competitive in all that we do, and we feel that whatever we do in life or dance to achieve perfection we need to be very obsessive!

What are your next professional commitments?

Marcus: I am now totally focused on being the Chair of the British Open Dance Festival starting this May and all that comes with this very important position and Karen is totally focused on helping all competitors in their quest to be as successful as is possible in the greatest Championship in the world!

What aspect of being a IDTA patron do you enjoy most?

Spreading the word that the IDTA is the best dance organisation in the world and an organisation that we believe is the future of the world of dance!