

Karen Smith-English received her BA in Theater Dance performance from Northern Illinois University studying ballet and modern dance. Upon receipt of her degree, she was offered a scholarship to study with the Joseph Holmes Dance Company in Chicago. Her professional career launched in 1985 while dancing principle roles with Emergence Dance Theater, under the direction of Sandra Schramel. The following year, Karen joined The Lynda Martha Dance Company of Chicago as a soloist where she toured both nationally and internationally across Eastern Europe. Other performance credits include dancing with Fuego Espanol, creating/performing in *The Passage of Time: Fair System Project*; a joint choreography project with Andy Taylor-Blennis, and guest performances Dance West Ballet in 1990 as well as with The Connolly Dance Company in 2004. Ms. Karen's choreography has been presented in many dance festivals including Regional Dance America and has been awarded many specialty awards for her choreography in a plethora of regional dance competitions.

Ms. Karen has been teaching dance for over 30 years. She founded the dance program of the Naperville Park District in 1988. Her other teaching credits include the Milwaukee Ballet School, The Rockford Ballet School, Monona Academy of Dance, The Madison Professional Dance Center, The Madison Ballet School, Steps Dance Center in Aurora, IL, The Chicago Multi-Cultural Dance Center, among other establishments within the Midwest. Students of Ms. Karen's have gone on to train in the country's most prestigious dance schools including Walnut Hill School of the Arts, The Rock School of Dance Education, Interlochen Center for the Arts, The Joffrey Academy, The Dance Theater of Harlem, The Fordham/Ailey BFA Program, and The Juilliard School, among so many others. Students of hers have become ambassadors for *Brown Girls Do Ballet* and placed in the Top 3 in the World's largest ballet competition, Youth American Grand Prix. Professional credits of Ms. Karen's former students include Collage Dance Collective, DanceWorks Chicago, Dallas Black Dance Theater, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company II, Mark Morris Dance Group, River North Dance Chicago and more. Ms. Karen has dedicated her life to training young dancers and shaping young individuals. She continues to fulfill this passion by providing private dance instruction, coaching, and dance teacher training in the Madison metropolitan area.