

Judges

Chicago IL (1) | March 6-8, 2026

Gail Cannaday is a Professional Dancer, Teacher, Choreographer, and Adjudicator from Chesapeake, Virginia that now resides in Morehead City, North Carolina. Gail started training, competing, and setting choreography at an early age. Her training under Arnora Hummell, Melissa Moore, and Andre Yemelianov includes: Ballet, Tap, Jazz, Lyrical, Hip Hop, Character, Modern, and Contemporary. In 2010 she joined the Dance Program at East Carolina University where she continued her dance training under Tommi Galaska, Dirk Lumbard, Galina Panova, Clarine Powell, Teal Darkenwald, and John Dixon. While at ECU she performed in various works and toured such pieces in concerts throughout North Carolina, Virginia, and Chicago, IL. She was also selected to have her own choreography performed alongside faculty pieces as well as teach alongside her faculty mentors at ECU during the Day of Dance, the Roots Festivals, in Musical Theatre Tap Classes, and for the East Carolina Tap Ensemble. Gail graduated from ECU in 2014 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Dance Performance. Gail's further training includes the North Carolina Rhythm Tap Festival, Rhythm World Chicago, the Chicago Human Rhythm Project, Denise Wall's Dance Energy, Millennium Dance Complex in Chicago, IL, #Taplife NY, and Broadway Dance Center in Manhattan, NY. In 2013, Gail was an apprentice with the Chicago Human Rhythm Project where she furthered her training and teaching career. She also had the opportunity to study closely under Tap Dance Masters Derick K. Grant and Charles Renato at that time. Since then, she has been teaching master classes and setting choreography at various studios along the East Coast in North Carolina, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts. Gail currently teaches Tap, Jazz, Ballet, Lyrical, Contemporary, and Hip Hop at Justice Elite Dance Company in Morehead City, North Carolina.

Lauren Gerrish, a native of Massachusetts, had the aspiration to become a professional dancer since the age of five. She received her training from esteemed instructors, including Joan Sheary, Terri Gordon, and Jo Ann Warren, and was a member of the Burncoat Fine Arts Magnet Program throughout her middle and high school years. Lauren majored in Dance at Dean College and attended the Summer Stages Dance Summer intensive, directed by Amy Spencer and Richard Colton. With extensive experience in performing on cruise ships, national and international dance tours, theme parks, TV and film, and conventions, Lauren has worked alongside notable artists such as the Goo Goo Dolls and the Barenaked Ladies. She has also been featured in Liongate's Be Fit Dance Series alongside Billy Blanks Jr. In the summer of 2018, Lauren opened her own dance studio on the West Coast and

her choreography has since received various awards at conventions and competitions. She is thrilled to join the SDA family for another outstanding season!

Makayla Wade from Panama City, FL began dancing at the age of two and has been performing since! Makayla danced competitively and was awarded many regional and national awards. Following high school, Makayla decided to further her education by attending Troy University where she received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance and graduated Cum Laude in 2021. She was awarded Troy University's Theatre and Dance "Outstanding Freshman" Award, studied abroad in Pietrasanta, Italy with world renowned faculty at The DAP Festival of Pietrasanta! In 2019, Makayla performed with Rosie Simas Danse Company in the piece "Weave" at the Alabama Dance Festival. She began to find a love for choreography and in the fall of 2019 she choreographed in Troy University's Fall Dance Concert "The Fallen" and in 2021 "BLOOD". Following graduation she performed with Cedar Point Live Entertainment in "Pep Rally", "150th Night Show Celebration and Parade" and "The Shrieks" where she worked with Marilyn Magness, Alexis Robberts, Josh Assor and Phillip Vitug. In January of 2021 she worked with Virgin Voyages where she performed and dance captained many shows onboard including "Untitled Dance Party Show Thing", "Ships in the Night" and inaugural cast of "Its a Ship Show". She performed works created by Ani Taj, Sam Pinkleton, House of Yes, Jenny Gersten, 7Fingers and more! Between contracts, Makayla teaches master classes and choreographs across the south region. Her choreography has won many regional and national awards including "Best Choreography" in open and contemporary category. Makayla hopes to continue perform and inspire the next generation of dancers.