

PHOTO COURTESY AMANDA THOMPSON, GETTY IMAGES ILLUSTRATION  
Seah Hagan, Joshua Ethridge, and Benjamin Miller in a cambré position.

# Family affair

Training together builds bonds for Pas de Vie Ballet owners, students

AMANDA KARIOTH THOMPSON COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS

As the daughter of two professional dancers and the owners and directors of Pas de Vie Ballet, Seah Hagan is carrying on a family tradition. "I've been around ballet since before I was born and I was 4 years old when I did my first performance with Pas de Vie." Now 17, Seah is literally following in her parents' footsteps as are many other Pas de Vie students.

Seah's father, ballet master Charles Hagan also got an early start. "I have danced since I was 7 years old. I started as a tap dancer and my teacher made me take ballet because it was necessary if I wanted to be a dancer. I fell in love with it."

Propelled on a similar trajectory, Seah's mother, dance instructor Natalia Botha began ballet training as a child under the guidance of her mother, also a dancer. By the age of 11, Botha was awarded a scholarship to study at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York. She and Hagan went on to enjoy professional careers with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.

"We're trying to pass on what we've learned and our experience," explained Hagan. "We've worked with all kinds of people,

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CD DAVIDSON-HIERS AND MARK HINSON  
DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER AND SENIOR WRITER

### Movies

**AN ONLINE OBSESSION:** An Instagram star (Elizabeth Olsen) is stalked by a delusional fan (Aubrey Plaza) who moves to Los Angeles to be closer to the famous online figure in the dark comedy "Ingrid Goes West." It's rated R and opens Friday at the AMC 20.

**'SAINTS' COMES MARCHING IN:** A former corporate salesman (John Corbett), who has become a pastor, is ordered to sell a small, country church but changes his mind when the congregation welcomes new worshipers from Burma in the inspirational drama "All Saints." It's rated PG and opens Friday at the AMC 20.

**EVERYBODY WAS KUNG FU FIGHTING:** The young, hungry, martial-arts fighter Bruce Lee (Philip Ng) makes a name for himself by challenging a kung fu master (Yu Xia) to a no-holds-barred match in Northern California in the bio-pic "Birth of the Dragon." It's rated PG-13 and opens Friday at the AMC 20.

**WELL, HE SAID HE'D BE BACK:** The future rebel leader John Connor (Edward Furlong) teams up with a cyborg (Arnold Schwarzenegger) from the future to stop a very liquid, shape-shifting cop (Robert Patrick) when James Cameron's smash-hit action pic is re-released as "Terminator 2: Judgement Day 3D." It's rated R and opens Friday at the AMC 20.

**TAKE IT TO THE BANK:** After the financial meltdown of 2008, a small, family-run bank in New York's Chinatown is singled out for mortgage fraud and becomes entangled in a lengthy court battle while the corporate banks are left alone when The Tallahassee Film Society presents the documentary "Abacus: Small Enough to Jail" on Friday and Sunday at All Saints Cinema, in the Amtrak station off Railroad Avenue. It's not rated. Visit [www.tallahasseefilms.com](http://www.tallahasseefilms.com).

**CUT TO THE 'BONE':** In the backwoods hills of Missouri, a 17-year-old daughter (Jennifer Lawrence) must track down her missing, meth-cooking father to save the family's home and

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Natalia Botha leads the summer dance intensive at Pas de Vie.

PHOTOS BY AMANDA THOMPSON

## Ballet

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all over the world, my wife and I, and we're trying to pass that on to our dancers."

Pas de Vie offers a summer intensive program which provides young dancers with extended time to advance their skill and technique, an option not available to them during the school year. "In the fall, they're coming two to three times a week for an hour and half to two hours. Well, these guys are coming five days a week and doubling that amount of hours so they're actually doing in one week what they might do in a month," said Hagan. "It is unbelievable how much they progress over a summer."

Joshua Ehridge, 17, has studied at Pas de Vie for 10 years and the summer intensive program satisfies his ever-present drive for improvement. "As I've gotten older, I've started looking at how good you can be and how much higher you can go with ballet. To me, that's my strength. Doing two turns is not good enough, three turns is not good enough. When you get there, it's great but you want to go for more, and more, and more."

Committing to 20 or more hours per week of training requires a considerable amount of sacrifice and hard work but, according to Benjamin Miller, 17, it's the camaraderie that motivates him to keep at it. "It's like a family here. It's good to have that companionship because these are people you're going to spend the majority of your time with so it's a good idea to like them," he laughed. "Not only are you trying to push yourself but the people around you are also helping you push yourself."

Second generation dancer Sydney Ewing, 16, agreed and added "we're all really close and it makes you so grateful to be in such a positive environment. When you're working with people that are your friends and partners,

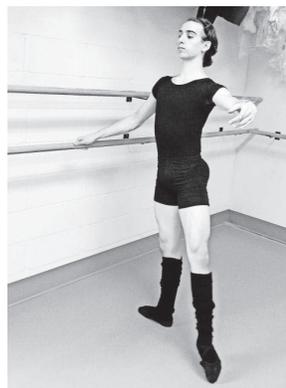
there's a big sense of trust. It makes you feel so lucky."

Pas de Vie's summer intensive allows the older, advanced students time to focus on some of the more challenging aspects of ballet such as partnering. Male dancers are often required to provide support for their partner through turns or lifts. These feats would be difficult or impossible without assistance and the work requires a great deal of refined technique, trust, and communication. This kind of choreography only appears effortless and it can be chaotic or even dangerous if dancers aren't synchronized in their timing and movements.

Partnering is something that Seah has been noticed for and, in keeping with the family legacy, she attended the Joffrey Ballet School in 2015. During that summer intensive, the partnering instructor asked her to demonstrate with him for the rest of the students. That was a proud moment for Seah and each of the dancers at Pas de Vie have experienced their own triumphs. Students feel the encouragement and guidance of those who have come before them contribute to these hard-won victories.

"When you're given a role that's beyond what you've been doing, you're pushed and it motivates you to go so much further and work so much harder," said Seah. "When you see that your teachers have the trust in you and they recognize that you will work hard, it makes it so much more of a deep feeling. It's not just about dancing right then, it's about the trust, not only between you and your partner, but you and your teachers and the other dancers. They are there to support you and to trust in your ability, just like a family."

Amanda Karioth Thompson is the Assistant Director for the Council on Culture & Arts. COCA is the capital area's umbrella agency for arts and culture ([www.tallahasseearts.org](http://www.tallahasseearts.org)).



Benjamin Mille enjoys the camaraderie at Pas de Vie.



Second-generation dancer Sydney Ewing trains with Natalia Botha.

## OBITUARIES

### Peter Iaukea

Rupert "Peter" Iaukea, 78, of Tallahassee, passed away on August 19, 2017.

Born in French Cameroons, West Africa, Peter was a longtime resident of Tallahassee. He was a 1956 graduate of Leon High School in Tallahassee. He was retired Army National Guard and served in Desert Storm.

Survivors include four children, Matthew Moran (Angie) of Monticello; Garrett Moran of Tallahassee; Elizabeth Iaukea (Gene Ryan) of Tacoma, Washington; and Polani Kimberl (Darin) of Tallahassee; one sister, Kai Moss of Chicago, IL; one brother, John Iaukea of Tallahassee; six grandchildren, Darin Kimberl II; Leilani Kimberl; Kristen Moran; Allison Heffner; Ron Heffner; and Casey Ryan; one great grandchild; and his former wife, Candace Iaukea.

A Celebration of Life will be held from 4-7pm on Friday, August 25th at Dorothy B. Oven Park, 3205 Thomasville Rd., Tallahassee, FL 32308. Memorials may be made to the Florida Wildlife Federation, [donatenow.networkforgood.org/donate-to-fwf](http://donatenow.networkforgood.org/donate-to-fwf) or the Tallahassee Animal Service Center, 1125 Easterwood Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32311. Lifesong ([www.lifesongfunerals.com](http://www.lifesongfunerals.com) or 850.627.1111) is assisting the family with arrangements.

[lifesongfunerals.com](http://lifesongfunerals.com)

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**In Loving Memory Of**  
**Beatrice E.T. Williams**  
07/19/1920 - 08/23/2016



Her nature was loving and giving. Her heart was made of pure gold. And to us who truly love her, Her memory will never grow old.

Love Always,  
Your Children  
Vermell, Charles,  
Terryll and Your Sister  
Elzora Saunders, Family and Friends

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