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### My Hoosier Hero

Being a high school student, I know first hand how unappreciative and disrespectful today's teenagers can be. One person in particular has had the patience required to deal with and guide hundreds of students for more than 60 years. An excellent teacher not only must have this patience, but also the passion and determination to teach and inspire others. I am nominating Bette Weber Flock to be the next Hoosier Hero; she is my grandmother and dance teacher, as well as an inspirational role model for anyone trying to reach his or her goals.

Born and raised in southern Indiana, Mrs. Flock is the owner and director of the Weber School of Dance. She also serves as the resident Choreographer for two High Schools in the New Albany Floyd County Consolidated School Corporation. Her hard work has helped them achieve Blue Ribbon and Grammy Award Winning recognition. Her community involvement includes being a volunteer for the Arts Council of Indiana, a board member of the Kandell Community Theatre, a member of the Louisville Ballet Association for teachers, as well as a member of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority for community service. Mrs. Flock has also received the Southern Indiana Arts Council "Life Time Achievement Award" for her work with youth and teens. She has choreographed more than 170 Broadway plays for the local area high schools, as well as community theatres including the Iroquois Amphitheatre and professional theatres such as the Actor's Theater

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of Louisville, Kentucky. To date, three of her shows have been performed in Edinburgh, Scotland: and thirteen musicals have been performed at the International Thespian Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska.

As a child, my grandmother always had a passion for music and dance. Encouraged by her parents to stay dedicated to her dreams, she was able to fulfill her goal as a performer and dance educator. Being born during the depression meant sacrifice for everyone, but she was still able to accomplish her dreams by being driven and dedicated.

Her interest in the fine arts began when she was still in school. A few days a week after class, she taught underprivileged children at a dance studio. She wasn't the only one in her family interested in the ballet. Her older brother, Bill Lee Weber, was a dancer as well; they took dance classes together every week. After Bill graduated from high school, he went to New York to study under famous dance teachers. This inspired my grandmother to pursue her dreams as a ballet dancer. When her brother returned from New York, they both decided to open their own dance studio: the Weber School of Dance was born in New Albany, Indiana.

The Weber School of Dance still exists today in downtown Jeffersonville, Indiana. This is where I, and hundreds of other local students, come to dance every week. The spring of 2008 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the dancing school. Many of her students have gone on to perform on Broadway: Sarah Gettlefinger being one of the

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most recent. Two of her students even performed on the Jackie Gleason Show as part of the June Taylor dancers.

I admire my Hoosier Hero for her motivation and perseverance over the years. To me, she is simply known as “Nana.” To her students, she is affectionately known as “Miss Bette.” I have been dancing since the age of three and have witnessed the influence Miss Bette has had on all of her students, including myself. Aside from instilling the love of the art of dance to others, she teaches discipline, respect, and confidence. She helps mold the shyest child into a self-assured young adult. She has been a role model, mentor, and friend to everyone who has had the privilege of working with her.

Four years ago, her husband, my grandfather, was diagnosed with lung cancer. The past few years have been an ongoing struggle with chemo treatments and long hours at the doctor’s office. Somehow, my grandmother has found the time and energy to keep up with the studio, recuperate from a recent knee replacement surgery, choreograph shows at two high schools, and take care of her ailing husband. Even at the age of 76, she has never given up or shown signs of weakness. Bette Flock is an inspiration to me as well as hundreds of other students. She has taught me everything from how to dance to how to never let go of my dreams. She says, “Never give up on your goals or your dreams. Be willing to work hard and realize that it may take time for you to achieve your goals.”

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As I prepare to attend Indiana University Bloomington in the fall, I will take with me the things I have learned over the years from Miss Bette. I know I am a better person because of her influence in my life. I also know that she will be admired and respected for many years to come due to her endless love and devotion to her profession and inspiration to others. I am proud to be her granddaughter and proud to nominate her as my Hoosier Hero.