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9 AM - 4 PM

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PARISIAN YOU'RE SOMEBODY SPECIAL

Rockette from page A1

yelled at me, 'Why are you sitting in the back? You're good, come up front,' she recalled. "I started pressing myself to get better."

The University of Las Vegas sophomore, who is seeking a bachelor of fine arts degree in dancing, spotted an audition call for the Rockettes on their Web site, tried out in spring 2000 in Chicago and won a job.

Krystle said dancing as a Rockette is harder than other dance jobs because of the precision aspect. "You have to look exactly like the person next to you," she said, adding she sometimes watches adjoining dancers out of the corner of her eye.

Richeson said the toughest number is "The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," where the dancers fall over straight-legged, like dominoes.

Her favorite is the last number, "Living Nativity." It comes complete with sheep, camels and supporting chorus and cast. "The audience always stands up. We all sing the 'Hallelujah Chorus.'"

The number was also the setting for the funniest memory she has of her first season as a Rockette: "A sheep took off, she broke the rope she was attached to and ran around the stage for five minutes. It was hard not to smile."

Richeson also has a souvenir of sorts from her first Rockette season — a puppy she and Sam named "Roxy," which appeared in the show.

Many elements of the Rockettes Christmas show haven't changed much since mom danced. "She

would know when things are coming up," Krystle explained.

Sam's story

"Krystle was born dancing. I knew it was going to be her life from when she first started walking. I'm thrilled she is a Rockette and can do the same wooden soldier dance that I learned," Sam said.

While Krystle is one inch taller than her mother — "She's 5-8, I'm 6-7" — she holds the same place in the line as Sam did, because Rockettes height requirements have increased. Dancers can range in height from 5 feet 5 1/2 inches to 5 feet 10 1/2 inches.

"I was a flash in the pan Rockette," she explained. Sam said that at her parents' urging, she left the troupe after less than a year to attend college.

At Radio City in New York, Sam was one of 48 Rockettes. The women rotated working three weeks on, seven days per week, then one week off, performing around the world.

"Seeing her do the dance of the wooden soldiers made me cry," Sam said. "We share nightly a lot of Rockette experiences together."

Both Sam and Krystle say they have a strong sense of God. "She cries during the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' and I cry. It's a combination of both the religious spirit and it's just something (dance) I absolutely loved as well," Sam said.

Injury threatens career

When Krystle was 16, she was rehearsing a dance move she'd

done several times before when "the whole class heard her foot pop," Sam recalled.

Krystle spent nine weeks on crutches with her foot in a cast, and three doctors said she'd never dance again. "I found a podiatrist who thought she could overcome it," Sam said. "Krystle believed in God and prayed." The cast came off one week before a national dance competition and Krystle placed among the top 10 soloists in the country, her mom recalled.

After the winter semester at UNLV, Krystle returns to Farmington Hills in May. She has worked in the Detroit Auto Show, done hair modeling, and teaches jazz dance at Juliana's Academy dance studio in Clawson.

"I love working with other people teaching," Krystle said, adding she aspires to be dance captain of the Rockettes.

When not dancing, she likes performing and singing in stage plays. She performed in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" at North Farmington High. "I like to express myself," she said.

Meanwhile, she hopes to remain a Rockette "as long as I can."

The show runs from Nov. 23-Dec. 29. Tickets are available at all Ticketmaster locations, including Marshall Field's and Harmony House. To charge tickets by phone, call (248) 433-1516. For more information, call the Olympia Entertainment hotline at (313) 471-6611 or visit OlympiaEntertainment.com.

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1. He will make the concerns of the citizens of Farmington Hills his top priority
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3. Encourage citizen input on decisions that impact our City's future.

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