

kamikazi

by: jen vu

The concept of UNC Kamikazi Dance Team began one day in 1996 when Chi Dang, on a whim, choreographed a dance for her and her suitemates to perform for a show at NC State. Before its creation, no such modern, Asian dance team existed at UNC-CH. Looking for an option that would offer Asians a way to become more visible on campus, Chi was inspired to expand her vision and creative energy into a full-fledged dance team after an early, enthusiastic reception. Due to her boundless energy and motivation, from these inconspicuous roots, in just a few years Kamikazi grew into a team of over thirty dancers, both male and female and of a variety of different races, catering to an ever expanding audience.

Because of its relative youth, the name "Kamikazi" (spelled with an "i" to differentiate it from the Kamikaze suicide pilots) didn't actually even come into conception until Fall 1999. True to the principles on which the team was founded, the name means "divine wind," and it is based on the natural force that defeated invading Mongolians and forever changed the course of Asian history. Similarly, Chi's inspiration for choosing this name was her hope that the team would provide a venue that would unify Asians and other cultures, help Asians learn to be proud to be Asian, and promote them to make a change in the current community.

A leadership board was created and elected to tackle the momentous task of filling Chi's shoes after she left and piloting the team through the upcoming years. This year's leaders, Jennifer Vu, Catherine Ahn, Priscilla Tsai, Day Kim, Daniel Chun, Lativia Jones, Liana Rebollo, John Lubbers, and Phuong Nguyen are dedicated to upholding Chi's vision and the ideals for which Kamikazi has come to stand - hard work, cooperation, and above all else, fun. These ideals make Kamikazi more than just a dance team. They make it a family. ~EW