

# FIRST TANGO



Below is a copy of an article about the 2010 Mississippi Opera's "Dance With the Stars" winners Dr. C.J. Chen and his pro partner Lisa Day. It appears in the Summer 2011 edition of Jackson's "boom" magazine. The event was a fund-raiser for the Opera and was a great success and very well attended. See photos from the event in our 2010 photo album:

[www.msdanceconnection.com/2010gallery](http://www.msdanceconnection.com/2010gallery)

## First Tango // by Tim Roberson

**D**r. C.J. Chen may be chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, but he is also an accomplished ballroom dancer.

It all started in 1998 when Chen, as a member of the Mississippi Symphony board, took a free dance lesson from In Step Studio to prepare for that year's Symphony Ball. Although now closed, In Step Studio allowed Chen and his wife, Dr. Lin Chen, to discover a new joy in ballroom dancing.

After the Symphony Ball came and went, the couple continued their lessons. They quickly discovered the sexy tango was their favorite dance.

Now 65, Chen has been dancing for more than 12 years.

"When you go to a class, you never stop moving. By the end, you are sweating all over," Chen says.

Last summer, Mississippi Opera held a Dance with the Stars



Dr. C.J. Chen and his instructor, Lisa Day, won the Opera's Dance with the Stars fundraiser.

event. Each Mississippi "star" partnered with a professional dancer to raise money for the opera.

Chen was invited to dance, but there was one problem.

"I'd never danced with anyone but my wife," Chen says.

This left him nervous about a partner. Mike Day, the instructor at

Chen's regular dance studio, Dance Connection in Pearl, stepped in to help, suggesting that Chen dance with his wife, Lisa Day.

Chen and Lisa Day trained at least 12 sessions in order to perfect their routine for the benefit. Mike Day choreographed the American tango routine, picked "Jealousy Tango" by Placido Domingo as their music and coached both dancers.

Chen was unsure what his UMMC colleagues would think. Several of them found out, and not only donated but also were present at the event to support Chen.

Not only did Chen and Lisa Day win first place with the American tango, Chen also raised the most money of all the contestants.

Chen says he won't dance this year. He has a scheduling conflict and is speaking at a medical conference. Besides, "I want everyone to participate, so it's not just limited to me," the dancing doc says.