John Butler's *After Eden*, she embodied guilt, frustration, and pain. When the Harkness Ballet folded in 1970, Isaksen joined Het Nationale Ballet in Amsterdam, where she danced many principal Balanchine roles. Her rendition of the Sleepwalker in *La Sonnambula* became legendary.

After her retirement, Isaksen became a Pilates teacher in New York.

—Joseph Carman

Richard Ellis (1918–2010)

Richard Ellis was the quintessential Drosselmeyer, a quiet man with a wicked sense of humor who loved to tell stories, both onstage and off. He will be remembered by generations of children and parents whom he captivated in Ruth Page's Chicago Nutcracker for 27 years.

But his gift to the dance world spans a lifetime of devotion, first as soloist with the Sadler's Wells Ballet (now The Royal Ballet), performing as the Nutcracker Prince in the first production of the ballet outside Russia in 1934. In 1946 he met and married fellow Royal dancer Christine Du Boulay, with whom he founded and co-directed the Allegro School of Ballet and later the Ellis-Du Boulay School of Ballet in Chicago.

The Ellises spent 40 years inspiring countless students who went on to join companies like New York City Ballet and the Joffrey Ballet. For 12 of those years, they co-directed their own company, the Illinois Ballet, which toured the Midwest. Among their students was Lou Conte, founder of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

"We adored them," says former student and veteran ballet teacher Birute Baradicaite. "They were like family, and he will always be 'Papa.'"

Ashley Wheater, artistic director of the Joffrey Ballet, remembers the couple's caring warmth. "Both he and Christine were always thinking about other people," says Wheater. "That's why they were such great teachers." He notes Ellis' extraordinary preparation for the role of Drosselmeyer. "He believed in it. Every single time he walked into the theater, his enthusiasm never waned. Each performance was as if for the first time."

Ellis died last November. The Joffrey's 2010 Nutcracker was dedicated to his memory.

—Lynn Colburn Shapiro