

THE DUPONT CURRENT

A yoga kind of life

Founder of Dupont studio publishes book on her 'hip, tranquil' life

By SARAH M. FINE
Current Correspondent

Leopard-print rugs. Activism workshops. Pink martinis. Female empowerment. Do these things go together? Maybe not at first whiff, but for Kimberly Wilson — yogi, fashionista, philanthropist and philosopher — it would be strange even to question their compatibility. In her corner of the urban universe, hippie and yuppie unite in the soul of the liberated, liberal, ultra-flexible gal.

Until recently, Wilson was best known for her role as the founder of Tranquil Space Yoga, a Dupont Circle establishment that now has branches

downtown and in Silver Spring. Since opening her studio's doors in 1999, however, Wilson has ascended from instructor to something close to diva-guru. Although she still teaches classes, her burgeoning career includes running wellness yoga retreats, designing a clothing line, starting a foundation and, most recently, authoring a manifesto: "Hip Tranquil Chick: A Guide to Life on and off the Yoga Mat."

A small group of devotees gathered at Olsson's Books & Records in Dupont earlier this month to hear Wilson read from this lat-

est project. Elsewhere, many D.C. residents were anything but tranquil as Bush announced his new "surge" strategy; but as Wilson stood poised at the bookstore's makeshift podium, all was well in the world. The master, who is 34, beamed gently at the semicircle of listeners and explained that she would be outlining her book's framework. "Hip Tranquil Chick," she began in a mellifluous voice, "is the modern girl's bible to living life with a fusion of fashion, passion and consciousness."

Wilson more than embodies the thesis of her book: that living fully requires a harmony between the spiritual and the physical — emphasis on the physical. Her style, captured in her "TranquiliT" clothing line, is seamless and flowing, like her yoga-trained movements. But in the world according to Wilson, the need for outer harmony extends beyond the body. In "Hip Tranquil Chick," she instructs her readers to "design an oasis at home and at work," and provides tips for interior decoration. Wilson's personal oasis, a U Street house that served as the gathering space for her first classes, is "a raspberry and leopard-print embellished flat" with an abundance of scented candles.

Courtesy of Kimberly Wilson

Although Wilson spent much of her childhood in Kansas, her demeanor has a distinct element of Southern belle. The most apt comparison might be to those rare elementary school teachers who never seem to run out of patience or concern. But Wilson's empathy includes a strain of benign flirtation. She often winks at her audience as she



Bill Petros/The Current

Kimberly Wilson, far left, is the founder of Tranquil Space Yoga and author of the new book 'Hip Tranquil Chick.'

speaks, and when she smiles — which she often does — her voice turns to honey. The intent is to make the recipients feel, in her words, "cocooned."

Behind this style and grace there is, of course, yoga. Many of the individuals gath-

ered last week at Olsson's were Tranquil Space members, and so it came as no surprise when Wilson removed her glasses and set down her book.

"I want to try something here," she said, and she proceeded to model various seated yoga poses. Her prowess as an instructor

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