

ONCE AN OLYMPIAN ALWAYS AN OLYMPIAN, NEVER FORMER NEVER PAST

January/February 2009

A LETTER FROM WILLIE BANKS

U.S. Olympians President



I truly hope that you had a Happy New Year! With all the challenges that face our country, this is a daunting time for many Americans. In 2009, the year of the ox (or bull) I hope you will join me in taking the year by the “horns” and finding courage and strength to do great things in our community. If nothing else we should all be “bullish” on the Olympic Spirit!

With this newsletter there are a few things to report that are significant to our organization. First, in December the U.S. Olympians met in a joint meeting with the Athletes Advisory Council (AAC) for the first time. The AAC is a very important and influential group working for the benefit of the U.S. Olympic Committee. The group represents Olympians, Paralympians and Pan American Games competitors and its existence is mandated by the Amateur Sports Act of 1978. Our joint meeting was supported by the leadership of the USOC, including CEO Jim Scherr. We were able to find common discussion points and open lines of communication. Our strength comes from our numbers and the weight of our good names in the movement. Now, for the first time the AAC can reach out to us for support on causes they feel are important to our competing athletes. I would be remiss if I did not thank Vice President Carol Lewis for her efforts in establishing this strong relationship for the benefit of both organizations.

Secondly, in March of this year a very important meeting called “SportAccord” will be hosted in Denver, Colo. Almost every Olympic sports executive in the world will ascend on Denver to talk about issues facing the universe of sport. This is important for two reasons: first, we will meet international sports figures who can influence the bidding for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A successful SportAccord could be extremely helpful to the Chicago 2016 efforts. Secondly, the U.S. Olympians Association will host Olympic alumni from around the world in an effort to find joint programs that will benefit our members.

As Olympians we are duty bound to help the Olympians of the future. Accordingly, we are stepping up to support the Olympic Scholarship Program that provides scholarships to Olympians and future Olympians in sports that are not supported by collegiate scholarship programs. Thanks to the efforts of Michigan Congressman Bart Stupak and Wisconsin Congressman Dave Obey, the federal government has provided nearly \$9 million in scholarships for Olympic athletes since 2001. Hundreds of athletes have received scholarships during this period, and many of the athletes have earned college degrees and Olympic medals. Soon, a team of Olympians will travel to Washington, D.C., to lobby for the funding to keep this worthwhile program operating.

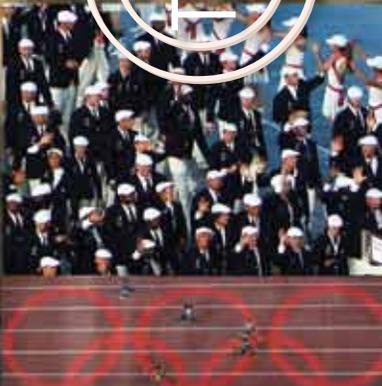
Finally, our organization will have a booth at the 2009 Senior Games in San Francisco in August to provide our senior athletes with an Olympic experience. We will have autograph signings and picture sessions with Olympic legends, and we will provide program materials and information about the U.S. Olympians. We also hope to host interactive seminars or clinics for the athletes. If you would like to be a part of the activities please let us know by emailing Cindy Stinger at cindy.stinger@usoc.org.

As you can see, the year of the Ox will be very exciting. Let’s take this opportunity to strengthen our resolve and become bullish on 2009. In the Olympic Spirit!

Willie Banks
President
U.S. Olympians

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U.S. Olympians Association



THE WINNERS OF THE 2008 USOC AWARDS

MICHAEL PHELPS, NASTIA LIUKIN, NATALIE COUGHLIN, ERIN POPOVICH,
AND THE U.S. MEN'S NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL TEAM

GARNER U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE AWARDS FOR 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



MICHAEL PHELPS



NASTIA LIUKIN



NATALIE COUGHLIN



ERIN POPOVICH

Representing 15 gold, seven silver and four bronze medals among them, the winners of the 2008 USOC Awards captivated Americans' hearts and minds during the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing. Swimmer **Michael Phelps** (Baltimore, Md.) has been named the USOC SportsMan of the Year, gymnast **Nastia Liukin** (Parker, Texas) and swimmer **Natalie Coughlin** (Vallejo, Calif.) have been named co-winners of SportsWoman of the Year, swimmer **Erin Popovich** (Silverbow, Mont.) has been named Paralympian of the Year and the **U.S. Men's National Volleyball Team** has been named Team of the Year.

"Through their actions both on and off the field of play in Beijing and throughout 2008, these athletes truly represent the best of what the United States has to offer and make us all proud to be Americans," USOC Chief Executive Officer **Jim Scherr** said. "Their achievements were central to the narrative of the largest Modern Olympic and Paralympic Games in history, and we at the USOC are proud to announce this year's recipients of SportsMan, SportsWoman, Paralympian and Team of the Year."

Phelps made history by winning eight gold medals in Beijing for a career total of 16 Olympic medals, including 14 gold medals and distinguishing himself as one of the most decorated Olympians of all time. In Beijing alone, he set seven World Records, eight American Records, and eight Olympic Records. He won gold in the 400-meter individual medley, 400-meter free relay, 200-meter freestyle, 200-meter butterfly, 800-meter free relay, 200-meter individual medley, 100-meter butterfly and 400-meter medley relay. At the U.S. Olympic Team Trials leading up to the Olympic Games, he set two World Records, two American Records, and two U.S. Open Records. Phelps was recently named Sports Illustrated's 2008 Sportsman of the Year and AP's Male Athlete of the Year.

With a tie vote, Liukin and Coughlin share honors as this year's SportsWoman of the Year. Liukin won five medals at the Olympic Games, including a gold medal for all-around, becoming just the third U.S. woman in history to win the

Olympians
THE

Olympic all-around title. Her five medals, which included three silver for team, balance beam and uneven bars and a bronze for floor exercise, tied the U.S. gymnastics record of five medals at one Olympic Games

gold medals in 100-meter freestyle (S7), 400-meter freestyle (S7), 100-meter breaststroke (SB7) and 200-meter individual medley (SM7) along with silver medals in 50-meter butterfly (S7) and 50-meter freestyle

Sean Rooney (Wheaton, Ill.), **Riley Salmon** (League City, Texas), **Clay Stanley** (Honolulu, Hawaii) and **Scott Touzinsky** (St. Louis, Mo.). Ranked No. 3 in the world heading into Beijing, the team defeated No.



U.S. MEN'S NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL TEAM

set by Mary Lou Retton in 1984 and matched by Shannon Miller in 1992.

Equally as impressive, swimmer Coughlin set five American Records and one Olympic record on her way to becoming the first American woman in any Olympic sport to win six medals in one Olympiad and bringing her career total to 11 Olympic medals. She earned a gold medal in 100-meter backstroke, silver medals in 400-meter free relay and 400-meter medley relay, and bronze medals in the 200-meter individual medley, 100-meter freestyle and 800-meter free relay.

In her third Paralympic Games, Popovich collected four gold medals and two silver for a career total of 14 gold medals. In Beijing she earned

(S7). Popovich has also been honored by Swimming World magazine. In 2005 Popovich was named the Women's Sports Foundation's Individual SportsWoman of the Year and won an ESPY award for Best Female Athlete with a Disability.

The 2008 Team of the Year did not lose a match at the Olympic Games in Beijing. The U.S. Men's National Olympic Volleyball Team won the gold medal -- and the first U.S. indoor volleyball gold medal since 1988 with teammates **Lloy Ball** (Fort Wayne, Ind.), **Gabe Gardner** (San Clemente, Calif.), **Kevin Hansen** (Newport Beach, Calif.), **Tom Hoff** (Park Ridge, Ill.), **Rich Lambourne** (Tustin, Calif.), **David Lee** (Alpine, Calif.), **Ryan Millar** (Palmdale, Calif.), **Reid Priddy** (Richmond, Va.),

1 Brazil, No. 2 Russia, No. 4 Bulgaria and No. 5 Serbia. The same team of players qualified for the 2008 Olympic Games by winning the NORCECA Continental Qualifier in January 2008 in Puerto Rico. The team's victory in Beijing capped an emotional Olympic Games for head coach **Hugh McCutcheon** (Christchurch, New Zealand), whose father-in-law was attacked

and killed in Beijing shortly after the Opening Ceremony of the 2008 Olympic Games.

The USOC SportsMan and SportsWoman of the Year awards have been presented annually since 1974 to the top overall male and female athlete from within the USOC member organizations. The team award was added in 1996 and the Paralympian of the Year was awarded for the first time in 2004. Winners are selected from the individual female and male athlete of the year and team of the year nominations of the USOC and National Governing Bodies for the Olympic, Pan American, Affiliated and Disabled Sports Organizations within the U.S. Olympic Movement.



"Reach for the stars... There are no limits!!!"

- Sara DeCosta (ice hockey, 1998, '02)



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WILLYE B. WHITE HONORED

By: DIANE SIMPSON-BUNDY (rhythmic gymnastics, 1988)

Five-time Olympian and global humanitarian **Willye B. White** is receiving the distinction of a Chicago park being named in her honor. The Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners voted unanimously at a December meeting that Gale Park located at 1610 W. Howard St. in Chicago will be renamed in the late two-time

Olympic silver medalist's honor.



A dedication is expected next spring after physical improvements are made and new youth programs get underway at the park.

WHITE'S LEGACY

I was just getting to know White in the early 1980s.

As the first five-time U.S. Olympian to compete in track & field, and with her Olympic medals, I held her to a standard far above me.

She was one of the first Olympians I ever met – and definitely one of the most approachable and humble elite athletes I knew, despite the aura of greatness that surrounded her. White was the first American woman to medal in the long jump, with a silver at the 1956 Olympic Games, and was a member of the winning 400-meter relay team at the 1960 Olympic Games. She was the first U.S. athlete to win one of the world's highest sportsmanship awards, the UNESCO Pierre de Coubertin International Fair Play Trophy.

At the time we met, I yearned to be an Olympian. Heading into my Olympic year in 1988, despite being the reigning national champion

and top U.S. athlete internationally, I still had my doubts. White would have none of that. "Believe in me," she demanded. You didn't argue with White.

I recalled that saying as I took to the carpet the final time at the Olympic Trials needing the routine of my life to make the Olympic Team. There was White: "Believe in me."

White was a remarkable human being. She started with little and made a name for herself not just in the Olympic Games but as a champion in life, including her work as a nurse and a philanthropist who gave back to the community.

She spent much of her life in Chicago, helping low income families and young kids improve their lives. Through her foundation she brought self-esteem to children on the South Side, including such initiatives as the Robert Taylor Girls Athletic program that taught sports and teamwork to children living in the housing project while helping provide healthcare.



Then she dropped everything to move back to her native South for her last years to help victims of Hurricane Katrina muddle through poverty and find hope.

White could think of nothing more exciting for her city than to bring the Olympic and Paralympic Games to Chicago in 2016. But unfortunately, her health declined before she could see it realized.

Now, those of us at Chicago 2016 and all U.S. Olympians must take the Olympic Flame of hope that White ignited and run with the torch.

For Willye.

Olympians
THE





BART CONNER AND NADIA COMANECI



APRIL HOLMES

**NEW ATHLETE RECRUITMENT
AMBASSADORS NAMED**

Bart Conner, Nadia Comaneci and **April Holmes** have been named Athlete Recruitment Ambassadors for Chicago 2016 to help encourage more athletes to sign up to support the bid efforts. With slightly more than eight months to go until the International Olympic Committee makes its final decision of the host city for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, support in this last phase is crucial to help engage the community in Chicago’s Games plan and to increase awareness of the Olympic Movement and its ideals.

“Bart, Nadia and April reached the pinnacle of their sports at the Olympic and Paralympic Games,” said Patrick G. Ryan, chairman and CEO of Chicago 2016. “We – along with the International Olympic Committee – believe that athletes should be involved at every level of the bid process. I can think of no better way to engage them than to have three outstanding ambassadors of

sport represent Chicago 2016.” Conner, a Chicago-area native, will lead the domestic effort of the bid. The only American male gymnast to win gold medals at every level of national and international competition, he qualified for three Olympic teams (1976, 1980 and 1984) and helped lead the U.S. Men’s Team to the gold medal in Los Angeles.

“Being an Olympian is an honor and a responsibility that keeps on giving beyond the Games,” Conner said. “Working with young athletes and being involved with the Olympic Movement is a life-long gift. As ambassadors of the bid, Nadia, April and I will encourage other national and international Olympians and Paralympians to participate and help bring the Games back to the United States in 2016.”

Comaneci will focus on international outreach. Comaneci scored seven perfect 10s at the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, winning three gold medals, one silver and one bronze. She added two golds and two silvers at the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and received the IOC Olympic Order – the highest award given by the IOC – in 1984 and 2004 to become the youngest and only two-time recipient.

Holmes will guide Paralympian recruitment. Holmes lost part of her left leg in a train accident in 2001 but went on to win the gold medal in the 100 meters in Beijing seven years later. She is the current world record-holder in her classification in the 100-, 200- and 400-meters, and she claimed bronze in the long jump at the Paralympic Games in Athens in 2004 with an American Record.

**ATHLETE NUMBERS INCREASE
WITH BEIJING GAMES**

Athlete recruitment increased 35 percent in the periods from April to June 2008 and July to September 2008 in the wake

of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing. Recruitment continues now – with every athlete essential to help demonstrate to the IOC that we continue to give back to our communities and are committed to promoting the Olympic Movement.

That is why Conner, Comaneci, Holmes, and staff with the sport and athlete relations department at Chicago 2016, are again appealing to all of you – even those of you who signed up two or three years ago – to ensure you update your athlete profile and also that you reach out to a fellow Olympian and sign him or her up at our revised Chicago 2016 Athlete Central Web site at: www.chicago2016.org/athletes.

**SPRING AND SUMMER
ATHLETE NEEDS**

The final Chicago 2016 Bid Book technical plan is at the printers for delivery to the IOC by Feb. 12. So sign up to help today! Volunteers are needed for outreach activities at SportAccord in March in Denver, Colo., and at the IOC Evaluation Commission visit to Chicago April 2–8. Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley also announced a new initiative at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting held on Jan. 17.

Mayor Daley’s plan activates his fellow mayors to engage with Olympians and Paralympians in their communities to focus on Olympic Day on June 23 through hosting such events as an Olympic skills competition or an Olympic Day Run, and to promote World Sport Chicago’s “Urban Youth Sports Initiative.” The U.S. Olympic Committee has teamed with Chicago 2016 to help support outreach efforts for the mayors and will look to the respective U.S. Olympians Associations chapters to help locate athletes in your areas.



“Persistence can change failure into extraordinary achievement.”

- Matt Biondi (swimming, 1984, '88, '92)



IN HONOR

Lolo Jones (athletics, 2008)

After making significant contributions to flood victims in her native state of Iowa this past summer, 2008 Olympian and World Indoor champion Lolo Jones has been named the Visa Humanitarian Athlete of the Year by USA Track & Field (USATF).

Jones was honored at the Jesse Owens Awards and USATF Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony held at the Silver Legacy Resort in Reno, Nev., in conjunction with USA Track & Field's 2008 Annual Meeting.

Allyson Felix (athletics, 2004, '08)

Michelle Kwan (figure skating, 1998, '02)
Former President Bush appointed 18 people, including Olympians Michelle Kwan and Allyson Felix, to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports through May 3, 2010.

Kwan, a nine-time U.S. and five-time world champion who won Olympic silver and bronze

medals in figure skating, also has served as a public diplomacy envoy for the Bush administration.

Felix won a gold and a silver in track & field at the Beijing Olympic Games in August. Among others also nominated by the president were Giants quarterback Eli Manning, NASCAR driver Bobby Labonte, New York Mets general manager Omar Minaya, former Notre Dame basketball coach Digger Phelps, and LSU football coach Les Miles.

Stephanie Brown Trafton (athletics, 2004, '08)**Bryan Clay (athletics, 2004, '08)**

USA Track & Field selected Olympic gold medalists Bryan Clay and Stephanie Brown Trafton for the Jesse Owens Awards as the sport's top American athletes in 2008.

The awards were presented Dec. 6 in Reno, Nev., as part of the Indianapolis-based USATF's annual meeting.



LOLO JONES, BRYAN CLAY, STEPHANIE BROWN TRAFTON

AMERICAN KANOKOGI, WOMEN'S JUDO PIONEER, DECORATED BY JAPANESE EMPEROR



Rena "Rusty" Kanokogi, the highest-ranking American woman in judo, was decorated with a prestigious civilian honor bestowed by the Japanese government for her work in creating female U.S. national and Olympic judo competitions.

Kanokogi, a seventh degree black-belt often referred to as the "mother of women's judo," was given the Emperor's Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette in a ceremony at the official residence of the Japanese consul general in New York, Motoatsu Sakurai.

"This is the happiest day of my life," Kanokogi said. "The honor bestowed upon me by the emperor and the government of Japan,

the honor of the rising sun, is both amazing and humbling."

The 73-year-old New York native is credited with laying the foundation of women's competitive judo, especially its entrance into the Olympic Games, where it made its official debut in the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games.

"I hope you will accept this award, not just as a recognition of your achievements, but also as a symbol of the strong bonds of friendship you have forged between the people of Japan and the United States," Ambassador Sakurai said.

Born in Brooklyn, Kanokogi began practicing the full contact martial art in the late 1950s, a time when women were prohibited from competing in judo.

She was often the lone female sparring with men in the New York area interstate clubs. When she entered competitive matches, she disguised herself as a male, only to have her victories and medals confiscated by officials once her sex was discovered. In 1962, Kanokogi traveled to Tokyo to practice at the Kodokan, the world headquarters of

judo, where she became the first female to be invited to practice at the main dojo with the men.

After returning to the United States, she was the U.S. judo coach for four years starting in 1976 and dedicated herself to ensuring that women could enter competitions.

She organized the first female judo World Championship at New York's Madison Square Garden in 1980.

Following the establishment of national women's judo matches, Kanokogi continued to pressure the IOC for women's inclusion in the global arena.

While men's judo became an official sport at the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games, women judoka, with Kanokogi's help, debuted in a demonstration in the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games and women's judo became an official entry four years later in Barcelona.

Kanokogi, president of New York State Judo Inc., was inducted into the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame in 1994.



"Every day you must do better than the day before — fast."

-Jean-Claude Killy (skiing, 1968/France)

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Clay is the Olympic champion in the decathlon, posting the highest score in the world at the Olympic Games in Beijing. He also was the World Indoor heptathlon champion in 2008.

Brown Trafton was the first American woman to win the discus gold medal in the Olympics since 1932.

Edwin Moses (athletics, 1976, '80, '84, '88)

The third Annual Men of Honor and Distinction Awards ceremony was held at The Hip Hop Culture Center in Harlem on November 20, and honored Olympic gold medalist Edwin Moses.

When Moses' college, Morehouse, had no track & field program, Moses -- a scientist at heart -- designed his own way to train for what would be his first U.S. Olympic Team Trials. He went on to set an American Record in the 400-meter hurdles and later, to win his first gold medal in the 1976 Olympic Games. Blazing one of the most impressive winning streaks in the athletic world, Moses

finished his career with 122 consecutive wins, 107 of them finals, earning him a place in The Guinness Book of World Records, two Olympic gold medals, an Olympic bronze, and two World Championship gold medals.

Anita L. DeFrantz (rowing 1976, '80)

The California Women's Law Center honored Olympian Anita L. DeFrantz for her work in making athletics more accessible and creating opportunities for children, women and minorities in sports.

The organization presented DeFrantz with the Abby J. Leibman Pursuit of Justice Award — which recognizes individuals dedicated to ensuring the civil rights of women and girls, and eradicating long-standing barriers in the struggle for equality and justice.

DeFrantz said she was honored by the recognition, adding that she has long admired the center's work to “inspire fairness and ensure that all



EDWIN MOSES , ANITA L. DEFRANTZ, JULIE PARISIEN

girls and women are free to accomplish their dreams on a socially and economically-level playing field.”

DeFrantz won a bronze medal in the Montreal 1976 Olympic Games as a member of the U.S. women’s eight-oared shell, and has served since 1987 as president of the LA84 Foundation, a non-profit organization created by the surplus from the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games.

Under her leadership, the foundation has been the top supporter of youth sports programs in Southern California, investing more than \$177 million in programs that have served more than 2 million young people.

DeFranz is also a senior member of the International Olympic Committee and was the first woman to be elected Vice President of the IOC in 103 years of its existence. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the U.S. Olympic Committee and as a Vice President of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d’Aviron, the international rowing federation.

Chuck Ferries (skiing, 1960, ‘64)

Long time U.S. Ski Team supporter and Olympian Chuck Ferries is among the list of five individuals who were inducted to the Colorado Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame as part of its Class of 2008. Ferries was honored at the 32nd annual Colorado Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame Induction Gala on Oct. 18, 2008, in Denver, Colo.

Andrea Wieland (field hockey, 1996)

CEO of the International Center for Performance and Health (ICPH), Andrea Wieland was inducted to The University of Iowa’s Athletic Hall of Fame for the class of 2008-09. “This is an extraordinary honor to be voted into such a distinguished group of Hawkeyes,” Wieland said. I had an exceptional athletic and academic experience at Iowa thanks to the athletic leadership of Dr. Christine Grant, Womens’ Athletic Director, head Coach Beth Beglin, the entire athletic department and coaching staff. I thank all my teammates, coaches and fans for making Iowa such a fantastic place to grow.” The Awards Dinner took place in Iowa City on Aug. 30, 2008.



“I’m trying to do the best I can. I’m not concerned about tomorrow, but with what goes on today.”

- Mark Spitz (swimming, 1968, ‘72)



JESSICA MENDOZA, SHANNON MILLER, ANGELO TAYLOR, JOEY CHEEK



FOUR OLYMPIANS NAMED TO 2008 MAINE SKI HALL OF FAME ON OCT. 24 AT LOST VALLEY SKI AREA

Leslie Bancroft (skiing, 1980, '88)

Promise showed early as Leslie Bancroft won ski meister honors by winning all three events (SL, GS and XC) two years running at Oxford Hills. She finished eighth in the inaugural World Cup cross country race in 1978 and went on to five years on the U.S. Nordic team and an appearance in the 1980 Olympic Winter Games.

Bob Kendall (skiing, 1972)

At Edward Little, Bob Kendall led two state championship teams, after which he skied for four years at the University of Colorado. This led to three years on the U.S. Ski Team during which he participated in the 1972 Olympics in Nordic Combined. Following his competitive career he coached Colorado's nordic skiers to two national championships.

Julie Parisien (skiing, 1992, '94, '98)

Julie Parisien had a breakthrough year in 1991 when she won FIS, Nor Am and Europa Cup races all across the United States and in Europe. She had the first World Cup win in four years, taking gold in GS at the World Cup finals at Waterville Valley. She went on to win three times on the World Cup circuit, a World Championship

silver medal, and to represent her country three times in the Olympic Winter Games.

Dan Simoneau (skiing, 1980, '84, '88)

Dan Simoneau was a junior cross country racer on the U.S. ski team from 1976 to 1988; on the World Championship team in 1982, '85 and '87; and the Olympic Winter Games in 1980, '84 and '88. He won the U.S. Championships 30K in 1987 and '88, finished seventh overall in the World Cup season, and finished second behind Bill Koch in the only 1-2 finish ever recorded by U.S. cross country skiers.

IN THE NEWS

Jessica Mendoza (softball, 2004, '08)

USA Softball National team member Jessica Mendoza (Camarillo, Calif.) was elected President of the Women's Sports Foundation. Founded in 1974 by Billie Jean King, the Women's Sports Foundation is a charitable educational organization dedicated to advancing the lives of girls and women through sports and physical activity.

"Over the years we have been very fortunate to have strong, dynamic leaders at the Women's Sports Foundation, and Jessica Mendoza is a shining example of what is really great about women's sports and the future direction of the

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foundation,” King said. “Jessica is one of those special athletes who is already involved in giving back to her sport and the community while she is still active. That passion, and her ability to connect so well with current and young athletes, will help her and the programs and organizations that benefit from the Women’s Sports Foundation as we move ahead in 2009.”

Mendoza has a long history with the Women’s Sports Foundation as she has been a member of the Women’s Sports Foundation Board of Trustees since 2005, served on the Finance and Legal Committee, and Athlete Relations Committee as well as is a Board member of the National Education Association. She also helped kick off GoGirlGo! Programs in Chicago and San Antonio, Texas, which help inner-city girls get active, stay healthy and learn skills such as leadership, confidence, body image and self-esteem.

Joey Cheek (speedskating, 2002, ‘06)

Shannon Miller (gymnastics, 1992, ‘96)

Angelo Taylor (athletics, 2000, ‘04, ‘08)

Laura Wilkinson (diving, 2000, ‘04, ‘08)

Olympic champions, Joey Cheek, Shannon Miller, Angelo Taylor and Laura Wilkinson spent a week visiting

military bases in Kuwait and Iraq on a goodwill tour.

Miller did a similar tour in Afghanistan.

“Visiting the troops last year in Afghanistan was such a moving experience,” said Miller, who is the most decorated U.S. gymnast with a total of 16 world and Olympic medals. “These men and women are the true heroes who put their lives on the line everyday for us. I was definitely excited about the opportunity to visit the troops in Iraq and personally thank them for all that they do.”

The delegation arrived in Kuwait on Jan. 15 and returned to the United States on Jan. 25. The athletes visited numerous bases throughout Iraq and Kuwait.

They visited servicemen and women in the U.S. Army, U.S. Marines and U.S. Air Force.

Mary Lou Retton (gymnastics, 1984)

Peter Vidmar (gymnastics, 1980, ‘84)

Olympic gold medalist Peter Vidmar was elected chairman of the USA Gymnastics Board of Directors and will be joined in the group by 1984 all-around champion Mary Lou Retton.

Vidmar and Retton, elected to one of four public sector



“If you’re not happy, you can’t perform at your best!!”

- Susie O’Neill (swimming, 1996/Australia)



PETER VIDMAR, MARY LOU RETTON, GARY HALL, JR.



Citius, Altius, Fortius...swifter, higher, stronger.

positions on the board, each will serve four-year terms. Ron Froelich, chair of USA Gymnastics, was named chairman emeritus. "This is a great time to assist USA Gymnastics in continuing to move in a positive direction," Vidmar said. "Our athletes and coaches have done a remarkable job of succeeding on a consistent basis, and I look forward to this opportunity."

Vidmar helped the U.S. men win the gold medal at the Los Angeles Games, their only Olympic team gold so far, and also won a gold on pommel horse and a silver in the all-around. He previously served on the USA Gymnastics board and executive committee, and was chair of the Athletes Advisory Council.

He is currently the vice chair of the California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

USA Gymnastics announced in November 2007 that it was restructuring its board, paring the group from 48 members to 20. In addition to the chairman, the board now has two representatives each from the men's and women's programs; one from rhythmic gymnastics; trampolining and tumbling, and acrobatics; five athlete representatives; four members from the public sector; and three from an advisory council that represents

independent gymnastics organizations.

Gary Hall, Jr. (swimming, 1996, '00, '04)

Gary Hall, Jr. was in New York for a fundraiser and to attend the Golden Goggles Award. He presented the Humanitarian Award, which he won in 2004.

The 10-time Olympic medalist, who swam in high school at Phoenix Brophy Prep, has officially retired from swimming and turned his attention to a new challenge: helping those with diabetes lead long, productive lives. Hall, who suffers from the disease, was expected to leave the sport after just missing out on making his fourth Olympic team last summer. He made his retirement official in conjunction with World Diabetes Day on Nov. 14, 2008.

The 34-year-old decided that his family - a wife and two small children - came before another attempt at the Olympics.

"I'm just not ready to commit myself to another four years," Hall said. "It was difficult to be away from my wife and kids this past year to commit myself to training. It's different when you have kids. To be honest, I was getting more enjoyment out of my kids than I was out of swimming."

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Like his father, Hall is a three-time Olympian who won two gold, two silver and one bronze in individual competition. He also captured three golds, one silver and one bronze as part of relay teams. But Hall is nearly as well known for his outspokenness and bringing a little flair to the sport of swimming.

At this year's U.S. Olympic Team trials in Omaha, he went out for the final of his only event in a red, white and blue robe that had "The Godfather of Swimming" emblazoned across the back, a tribute to the late James Brown.

But Hall finished fourth in his last race. Only the top two made the Olympic team.

"I'm really not disappointed at all with the result. I swam the second-fastest time of my career (21.91 seconds)," Hall said. I hadn't swam that fast since 2000, which is a long time ago. My time at the trials was good enough to win at any previous Olympic Games. I'm certainly not disappointed. It's something to be proud of."

Hall, who was diagnosed with diabetes in 1999, will devote himself to his foundation that works with those who have the disease.

"I think my assets are better appreciated and more needed in diabetes than they are in the pool," he said.

Despite all his accomplishments, Hall said his best

moment came outside the pool after the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, when a mother approached him to talk about her diabetic son.

"She told me that I had inspired her son, who was 7 or 8 years old, to join the soccer team," Hall said. "On the previous weekend, the kid scored the game-winning goal and all the kids picked him up and carried him off the field on their shoulders."

"To share my own personal story and be able to inspire and motivate, that's the greatest accomplishment of my swimming career."

Art Martori (wrestling team leader, 2004)

John Smith (wrestling, 1988, '92)

Two-time Olympic wrestling champion John Smith and Sunkist Kids founder Art Martori were the first members of the amateur wrestling community to be inducted into the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, during the 31st annual Induction and Awards Gala held in Schaumburg, Ill. on Nov. 1, 2008.

"The inductees represent the very best of their sport, and are chosen not only for their accomplishments, but for their character, integrity, sportsmanship and contributions to their respective sport and their community," said Dan Sergi, the dinner chairman for the event.

Smith won gold medals at the 1988 Olympic Games



"Those that succeed push just a little harder — each day — and those that don't wish they had years later."

- Al Oerter
(athletics, 1956, '60, '64, '68)



THE OLYMPIANS

in Seoul, South Korea, and the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. He also won four World gold medals for the United States (1987, 1989-91), winning six straight World and Olympic titles. Smith won the Sullivan Award and the USOC SportsMan of the Year award as the nation's top amateur athlete.

Smith was a two-time NCAA champion for Oklahoma State. He is currently the head coach at his alma mater, where he has coached five NCAA champion teams during his 18 years, and has become Oklahoma State's all-time winningest coach. He is a Distinguished Member of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

"It was even more special having Art Martori inducted with me," Smith said. "He was very important in my career when I wrestled for the Sunkist Kids. He allowed me to focus on being the best wrestler in the world for six years. He was an important part of my success."

Martori, a former wrestler and successful businessman, founded the Sunkist Kids Wrestling

Club three decades ago and built it into one of the most successful sports clubs in the world. Martori served a term as president of USA Wrestling and has been a leader within the organization for many years. He has been inducted as a Distinguished Member of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Brandon Slay (wrestling, 2000)

2000 Olympic champion Brandon Slay of Dallas, Texas, has been named as the Assistant National Freestyle Coach and National Freestyle Resident Coach by USA Wrestling.

Slay will be responsible for assisting in all facets of the National Freestyle Team program, with his primary focus on managing the U.S. Olympic Training Center (USOTC) resident program in Colorado Springs. He will manage the daily operations, recruit and train full-time resident athletes in the program, and also train those who attend on a short term basis.

"We are excited to take another step in building America's freestyle wrestling team," said



ERIN MIRBELLA & FAMILY, MIA TRUESDALE, GRACE & JIM TRUESDALE

National Freestyle Coach Zeke Jones. “Brandon is an Olympic champion and has all the things we are looking for as a National Coach. He has character, passion and a strong work ethic. Brandon will be a great leader of the program and the athletes will enjoy working with him.

As a former resident athlete, he understands the structure, demands, benefits and environment at the USOTC. He exemplifies the holistic approach, which includes winning gold medals and representing our nation with dignity and excellence.”

MILSTONES

Erin Mirabella (cycling, 2000, ‘04)

Olympian Erin Mirabella welcomed daughter Lindsey Grace to the world on Dec. 29, 2008, at 3:44 a.m. She weighed 6 lbs, 4 oz, and was 19 inches long. Erin and Lindsey are both doing well, and Erin’s other child, Mi-cah, is happy to have a baby sister.

Picabo Street (skiing, 1994, ‘98, ‘02)

Once again it came down to a mountain and a prize. But this time instead of a red, white and blue uniform, Olympic skier Picabo Street wore a Monique Lhuillier gown – and the gold came in the form of a wedding band. On Oct. 25, 2008, Street married businessman John Reeser on an Alabama mountaintop called Prospect Mountain.

Grace Jividen Truesdale (judo, 1992)

Grace Jividen Truesdale, a member of the USA Judo Board of Directors, gave birth to Mia Isabella Truesdale on Oct. 21, 2008. At 8 lbs, 8 oz, and 20 inches long, little

Mia is already projected to one day enter her mother’s former weight division of 63 kg. Proud parents Grace and Jim Truesdale – a frequent fixture of USA Judo tournament staffs – were married on Aug. 8, 2008.

IN MEMORIAM

Glen Brand (wrestling, 1948)

Glen Brand, the first of five Iowa State wrestlers to win an Olympic gold medal, died on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2008, in Omaha. He was 85.

He won his gold medal in the 82 kg class in the London 1948 Olympic Games. Brand, won an NCAA championship at Iowa State at 174 in 1948 after finishing second at 175 in 1947.

Brand was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 1978. He was a 1957 inductee into the Des Moines Sunday Register’s Iowa Sports Hall of Fame. A Hall of Fame wing honoring Iowans at the Dan Gable International Wrestling Institute and Museum in Waterloo is named for Brand.

Iowa State produced several gold medalists after Brand, including Dan Gable, Ben Peterson, Kevin Jackson and Cael Sanderson.

G. Larry James (athletics, 1968)

G. Larry James, a former champion runner who won gold and silver medals in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, died Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008, on his birthday, at his



“Always believe in yourself!”

- Tara Lipinski (figure skating, 1998)



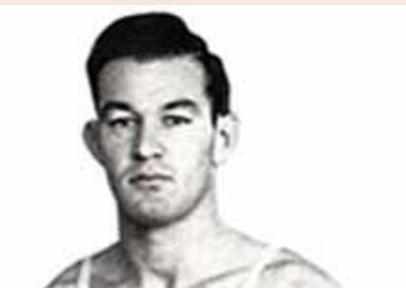
home in Galloway, N.J. He was 61.

The cause was colon cancer, said William Preston, the coordinator of cross-country and track & field at Richard Stockton College in Pomona, N.J. James had been the athletic director there for 28 years.

James, nicknamed the Mighty Burner, was an explosive runner, but deceptively so. Slender and carrying only 155 pounds on his 6-foot frame, he ran with a floating, almost feathery stride.

In the 400-meter final, the United States swept the medals with Lee Evans first, James second and Ron Freeman third. Evans (43.86 seconds) and James (43.97) broke the World Record.

At the medals ceremony, the three Americans wore black socks and black berets and raised their fists, but when the national anthem was played, they removed the berets and lowered their fists.



GLEN BRAND, G. LARRY JAMES



Two days after that, the three runners and Vince Matthews won the 4x400-meter relay in 3 minutes 56.16 seconds, earning gold medals and a World Record that would last 24 years.

Don W. McKenzie, Jr. (swimming, 1968)

Don W. McKenzie, Jr., shared 61½ years with us before complications from a Glioblastoma brain tumor ended his life on Dec. 3, 2008. He transitioned peacefully at 4:55 pm in his home, surrounded by love. McKenzie was a graduate of Grant High School, LA Valley Jr. College, Indiana University, U.S. Naval Officer Candidate School, and Northern Nevada Real Estate School. As the President of Practice Management Services, he created and supported computer software systems for medical, dental and small businesses. He was a real estate investor, counselor and licensee with Remcor in Reno.

McKenzie was a 1968 Mexico City double gold medal champion in swimming (100m breaststroke and breaststroke leg of the 400m medley relay) He held numerous records: regional, national junior college, Big Ten, NCAA,

American, Olympic, U.S. Masters, and World Championships. He held at least 18 All-American Awards and was inducted into the IU Hall of Fame and the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his father and mother, Don and Clarice McKenzie; wife, Syd McKenzie; children, Amy, Ryan, Anne, Emily, and Amanda; new granddaughter Naomi; siblings, Bob McKenzie and Suzanne Wortman, and a loving family of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, in-laws and friends.

Roy Saari (swimming, 1964)

Roy Saari, a USC swimmer whose unusual kicking style propelled him to swim the first sub-17-minute 1,500m freestyle race and later to win a gold medal in the 1964 Olympic Games has died. He was 63.

Saari collapsed and died on Dec. 30, 2008, of congestive heart failure at his Mammoth Lakes home.

Peter Daland, Saari’s coach at USC, called him “the greatest swimmer of his time.”

Saari -- pronounced “sorry” -- was only the second swimmer to win nine NCAA individual championships, making his mark between 1964 and 1966. His four World records included breaking the 17-minute barrier in the 1,500m freestyle with a time of 16:58.7 at the 1964 U.S. Olympic Team Trials.

At the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Saari won a gold medal in the 4x200m freestyle relay and a silver in the 400m individual medley. He finished seventh in the 1,500m freestyle at the Olympics, partly because he was fighting a cold, Daland said.

The son of a swimming and water polo coach at El Segundo High, Saari was also a standout on the U.S. Water Polo Team that qualified for the 1964 Olympic Games. Because a rule prohibited him from being on both teams, Saari competed as a swimmer.

Saari is survived by his wife of 41 years, Sheryl; his son, Jeff; his daughter Joani Lynch; his siblings, Carol and Robert; and four grandchildren.

John Richard Wilson (wrestling, 1956, ‘60, ‘64)

John Richard Wilson, a retired educator and a former University of Toledo wrestling coach who wrestled in three Olympic Games, died Dec. 31, 2008, in a Franklin, Tenn., nursing home from complications of Alzheimer’s disease.

Formerly of West Toledo, Wilson moved to Tennessee in 2000 to be near his son and daughter-in-law, Bruce and Cathy Wilson.

Wilson was an administrator in public schools for much of his career. He retired in 1993 as dean of students at McTigue Junior High School in the Toledo Public Schools, where he had taught and coached.



“Follow your dreams as long as you live! Never be afraid to go out on a limb to live up to your expectations. Always do things your way and Have Fun!”

-Picabo Street (skiing, 1994, ‘98, ‘02)



THE OLYMPIANS

He was also a principal of a Fayette, Ohio, high school and held the post for several years.

“The highlight of his career, even though he was a good coach and an excellent wrestler, was that he earned a position of superintendent of schools in Athens, Ohio,” said Dick Torio, a longtime friend.

Wilson is a member of the Varsity T Athletic Hall of Fame and the Pennsylvania Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Survivors include his sons, Bruce, Matthew, and Andrew Wilson; brother, Don Wilson; and four grandchildren.

Pete Newell (basketball coach, 1960)

Pete Newell, the Hall of Fame basketball coach who won an NCAA championship and Olympic gold medal and later tutored some of the game’s greatest, died Nov. 17, 2008. He was 93.

Newell coached 14 years at San Francisco, Michigan State and California before doctors ad-

vised him to give it up because of the emotional toll. Newell coached the Bears to a national title in 1959. His final coaching job came in the 1960 Olympic Games, when he took a U.S. team led by Oscar Robertson, Jerry West and Jerry Lucas to a gold medal in Rome.

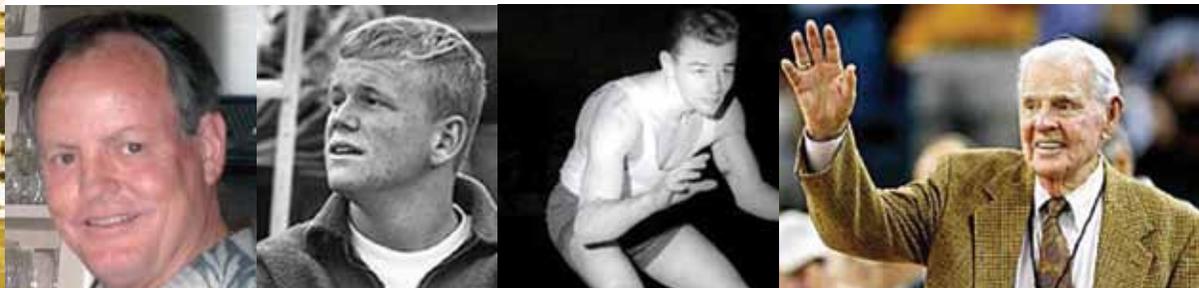
William Parks (sailing, 1960)

William Parks died on Dec. 9, 2008, of complications from cancer in Glenview, Ill. He was born in 1921.

Parks won a bronze medal in the 1960 Olympic Games racing his boat “Shrew” with **Buck Halperin**.

For the last six winters, Parks and his wife Joan towed his Star sailboat to the U.S. Sailing Center in Coconut Grove. He raced the winter series for Star boats out of Coral Reef Yacht Club.

Born in Oak Park, Ill., Parks began his long sailing life at 14, when he and his dad built a Snipe in the garage. He entered the U.S. Navy in a V12 program from Illinois Institute of Technol-



DON W. MCKENZIE, ROY SAARI, JOHN RICHARD WILSON, PETE NEWELL

ogy. He served in the Philippines with the 11th SeaBee Battalion. His business life was spent with Vapor Corp. in Chicago, Ill. He retired as president in 1987.

Parks was selected Chicago Yachtsman of the Year in

1994. He and Joan rekindled an old love affair and married in January 2004 in Key Largo.

He is survived by his daughter, Julia Soxman, and by his brother.



BOOK REVIEW

Lloy Ball (volleyball, 1996, '00, '04, '08) — "THE BIGGEST MISTAKE I NEVER MADE"



When he was a high school senior, Lloy Ball disappointed most people in his small Northeast Indiana community by turning down a chance to play basketball for Bobby Knight at Indiana University. Instead, Ball chose to play volleyball for his father at Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne. Though many people still tell him they

thought he made a mistake by not going to IU, Ball won a gold medal in his fourth Olympics at age 36 in 2008. In 2008 he became the first American male to compete in four Olympic Games in one of the major team sports. He has played more than 400 matches for the United States national men's team, a record, and no one has been the U.S. captain longer than his 10 years. He has become the first American to win championships in the three major European professional leagues, and was also named the most valuable player of the European Championships league, essentially

one of the best leagues in the world. To follow that up he was named MVP of the 2008 World League before leading the U.S. to the Olympic gold medal in Beijing. He is recognized almost everywhere – except in his home country.

And even in his hometown, he still has people who are never shy about saying to his face they think he made a mistake by not playing basketball for Bobby Knight at Indiana University. He was still hearing it even as he prepared to play in his fourth Olympic Games, which is why his book is titled, "The Biggest Mistake I Never Made."

Among the topics in the book are playing professionally in Europe, what it was like to be an American living overseas on 9/11, his various tattoos, playing for his father, his expressiveness on the court and the march to the 2008 gold medal.

The book costs \$17.50 and is available from www.Authorhouse.com and will soon be available in bookstores. For more information, contact co-author Blake Sebring at bsebring@news-sentinel.com.

"Win or lose you will never regret working hard, making sacrifices, being disciplined or focusing too much. Success is measured by what we have done to prepare for competition."

- John Smith
(wrestling, 1988, '92)



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ON BEHALF OF THE PARADE OF LIGHTS AND THE DOWNTOWN DENVER PARTNERSHIP, OLYMPIANS AND PARALYMPIANS WERE FORMALLY INVITED TO APPEAR IN THE 2008 9NEWS PARADE OF LIGHTS ON DECEMBER 5 AND 6. AS A GROUP THEY SERVED AS THE GRAND MARSHALS FOR THE PARADE AND LED THE PROCESSION GIVING THE CITIZENS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION THE OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS.



12 OLYMPIC ATHLETES, COACHES AND HOPEFULS SPREAD THE SPIRIT OF OLYMPISM WHILE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO., AT THE NOVEMBER 22 OLYMPIC BUILD DAY WITH HABITAT FOR HUMANITY. THEIR VOLUNTEERISM WAS A PART OF THE USOC'S TEAM FOR TOMORROW HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM.



ON DECEMBER 12, 2008, MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIANS ASSOCIATION AND THE ATHLETE'S ADVISORY COUNCIL WHO WERE IN LAS VEGAS FOR A JOINT MEETING TOOK TIME OUT TO VISIT THE ANDRE AGASSI CLUBHOUSE, HOME OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB, AND PARTICIPATED IN AN EVENT ENTITLED "GAME NIGHT." SOME OF THE OLYMPIANS BROUGHT THEIR OLYMPIC MEDALS AND SHARED THEM WITH THE KIDS.

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