



Steve Whitlock

Owner & Head Coach, Acronauts

***Gymnastics for All* Program Manager**

USA National Team Coach



**HALL
OF
FAME**

Inducted 2010

Steve was born and raised in Illinois where he became a competitor and high school tumbling champion. Steve competed at Southern Illinois University (SIU) from 1963 to 1967, during which time the college team earned 3 NCAA championship titles.

He continued his education with graduate training in Psychology at Wayne State University in Detroit. From 1967 to 1974 he worked toward a PHD and served as an instructor in Psychology and Physical Education with an emphasis on gymnastics.

The Acronauts began their training in a junior high school gymnasium in West Bloomfield, Michigan and in 1971/72 Judy Dobransky and Mel Foster came on board as team coaches. In 1974, Steve opened one of the first private gymnastics facilities in Michigan. The home of the Acronauts was in Bloomfield Hills in a single bay with modest equipment. During the years of 1971 to 1988, the Acronauts trained many coaches and athletes at all levels.

Steve maintained a most impressive record during his Michigan coaching years. His many awards and titles include: Michigan Coach of the Year, Regional Elite Development Director, Regional Junior Olympic Development Director, Vice President of the Elite Coaches Association, and Team Coach for Sports Festival. The Acronauts dominated the State Championships for many years as indisputable winners.

Steve coached Elite athletes: Beth Shepard, Heidi Brady, Dana Dobransky, Heather Stepp, Wendy Hanafée, Ruth Aguayo, Jill Stuart, Megan Newmyer and Barrie Muzbeck.

Collegiate athletes attended schools with gymnastic scholarships from: University of Alabama, Michigan State University, University of Georgia, University of Minnesota, University of Pittsburg, Eastern Michigan University, Central Michigan University, Western Michigan University, Northern Michigan University, University of Pennsylvania, Ohio State University, University of Utah, University of Vermont, Southern Utah University, Southern Illinois University.

What is additionally rewarding are the many athletes who went through the Acronaut program who continued with Collegiate gymnastics and are still actively involved in the sport! These athletes include:

Dana Dobransky Duckworth: Assistant Coach, University of Alabama

Ruth Aguayo Miller: Owner and Head Coach of Oakland Gymnastics (who presently employs Mel Foster, Michigan Coach of the Year 2009).

Laura Makowski: Miss Fitness USS, MSU Graduate, Owner of MAC ATTACH, body building.

Teresa Bertoncin: Taos, New Mexico Gymnastics Academy

Beth Shepherd: Evansville Indiana Gymnastics

Teresa Campanero: Stars and Stripes Gymnastics

There are not too many Michigan coaches or other gymnastics persona who did not enjoy the tutelage, camaraderie and unselfish sharing of Mr. Whitlock at some point in their coaching careers. These include: Dennis Spencer, Farmington; Doug Rowe, MAG; Mike King, Ft. Wayne Gymnastics; Mel Foster, Oakland Gymnastics; David Kuzara, FGC Collegiate Coaching and presently Head Coach at WMU; Jerry Tobias, Dr. Tobias; Alex Bard, Head Coach, Mississauga Gymnastics/Canada; Sharon Zuber, Past World Championship Team Member; Cary King Kevin Watson, Northbrook, Illinois; Toby Towson, Prominent Choreographer; Sheryl Kent; Karen Koch; Barb Cotter; David Begian, owner of GTC.

In 1988., Mike Jaci gave an offer that could not be refused. As an outstanding clinician and knowledgeable coach, the perfect place for Steve was the up and coming office where so many of his talents and his passion for gymnastics could be shared. Steve left Michigan for a multi-tasking experience with the USGF office in Indianapolis, where he presently resides today. Among his many responsibilities over the last 20+ years include:

USA Congress coordinator, site selection, program related activities that included the Banquets and Congress Parties;

Technique Editor;

Web Master: the ever ongoing dispensing of timely information;

Junior Olympic Program Development: a newly designed position for improving the present program;

General Gymnastics Coordinator/Chairperson: a position which he holds today. His love of travel and international interests has seen the program blossom with his involvement and general gymnastics groups from all over the United States participate in the 4 year cycle of the wonderful International Gymnastradas.