

Within reason the Newsletter follows this word content per single entry (Times New Roman, 10 font sizes)  
New entry: Resumes/history since FSU = Twenty-two (22) words per line, Twenty two (22) lines  
Second, third etc. entry..... = Twenty-two (22) words per line, Eleven (11)

**“Once teammates, always teammates” by Charlie Christian.**  
**2007 REUNION - May 25-26-27-28 2007.**

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**Barbara Sheehan Withers | 54-62 | Response to copy of Merik's email** “Dear Jack, great to hear from Merik - I do hope he also can come next year, also some of the others, including Bob Murray. We should mention the dates we are planning for in the next edition of the Newsletter (is it really #20? we need to be compensating you for all your hard work, how about a hug and a kiss?) Looking At the calendar, it looks like **Memorial Day Week-end**, Hugs & kisses, & fondly, B.” ..... {I could go for the hugs and kisses.....except from Joe Gusic and Raphael. Lecuona.....and for sure not Larry Bestmann .....well..... maybe Bestmann. ...jmm}

**Claire Essig (Mrs. Dick) Traynor | 59-62** “I just want to thank all of you for your many kindnesses to me upon my husband, Dick's, passing on June 17th. The endless cards, notes, photos, phone calls, flowers, money, prayers and e-mails were very much appreciated. I could not have made it through these difficult times without your support. Dick enjoyed getting to know each of you at different times over the years. We had many memories of wonderful visits we shared with you. I never realized I had so many friends. Although, we were married for 42 years, I have known some of you more than that! Thanks again for your kind words, thoughtfulness and enduring friendships. I love you all, Alma Claire”

**Don & Connie Holder | 51-57 | The Gentle Giant** “Jack, May I add another story concerning Larry Malmlin. It's been said if one is spoken about, they are not gone and much is to be said concerning this " Gentle Giant." Occasionally I've been asked if I wish to have sugar added to my coffee. My reply is no thanks, I've been “Malmlinized”. Of course the return look questions my comment, which prompts my story. Gymkana was on the road somewhere and we all were in some cafeteria ordering our meal with Doc just behind us scrutinizing our spending. Larry was the next in line behind me. My last request was for coffee, so I answered yes to cream and sugar. to which Larry emphatically replied " no he doesn't". I looked in amazement, stating that I always drank my coffee that way. Larry's reply was, "not anymore," so considering his manly statue, I drank my coffee black for the next few days while Larry monitored my every cup. After ending the tour, Connie made me a cup of coffee with cream and sugar. Had to eject the brew from my mouth for being too sweet and have been “Malmlinized” ever since. Many years later Larry and family visited our home and enjoyed a great pool party. We will all miss this unique individual. Don”

**Larry Bestmann | 55-58 | Lennart** “Jack, Thank you for another superb newsletter. The Lennart letters brought tears to my eyes. I'm glad there are so many fine memories of him. I do remember his chest thumping when he was disturbed with someone and I'm glad I didn't disturb him too much. Larry”

**Merik & Anna Ceska | 55-60 | Lennart** “Dear Jack. Thank you so much for all the e-mails you are sending me. I attended FSU from 1955 until 1960 (in spring 1960 I graduated). I am now spending almost all my time in Czech Republic in trying to repair all the damages to my house caused in last winter. Very sorry to hear the sad news about Larry Malmlin. In 1957 I shared in Tallahassee an apartment with him (as well as with Larry Bestmann and Ron Amster). When I was then living in Sweden I met Larry and his wife on various occasions. Kind regards Mirek”

**Jack Miles | 50-58 | Reply to above** “Hi Merik: I always have such great and wonderful memories of you spending so much of your valuable school time coaching me in preparation for the '56 Olympic Games. I am forever grateful. Even today, when I stand in line or on a stage I align my body the way you taught me on how to stand correctly in preparation to mount the apparatus. It is simply, good posture. Could you believe that after fifty years I would still be hearing you telling me how to stand up straight? I saw your face in some pictures with Barbara Withers when you were visiting your daughter in Tallahassee this year. Of course I would never had known who you were if we passed on the street. You are so much better looking now. Me also. I keep trying to find, or get, a picture of me that doesn't look SO much like me today. You and I are both putting our houses back together - me from Hurricane Wilma - you from the winter storms. Have fun and be thankful that we are able to do just that. Except for the groans of course. Have you ever noticed that children don't groan and grunt when they get up and down? Remember us, reminding you of that the next time you get up moaning after hammering a nail. Best of all good wishes, Jack”

**Brent Pichard | 50-54 TTT | The kids from the 50's** “Dear Jack: Your remarkable efforts to re-connect the thousand-piece personnel puzzle that is F.S.U. Gymnastics is admirable. "Thank you" for touching fond memories in the deep recesses of all our brains. As I recall, I was recruited while a third grader at Caroline Brevard Elementary School by Howard "Beans" Stevens. That would have been in 1950. Stevens was coaching there along with Clarence Hale. I was involved with TTT for about 4 years - from 1950 to 1954. Of the same vintage were Jack Carswell, Mary Cummings, Evelyn, Kay and Carole Laing, Karol Anne Kuerstiener and Nancy Lamb, among others. We "Tots" felt like the adopted darlings of Hartley and Billie Price and our extended family was made up of names, personalities and incredible talents like Gutting, Miles, Lecuona, Rabbitt, the Regna brothers, Rapp, Roetzheim, Schwarzman, Stanton, Taylor, Tanaka and Wallace. My first show was at the Leon County Fair Grounds in Tallahassee on a clear and

cold night. I remember the muscular Scott Stanton, costumed only in the briefest of briefs, shinnying up one side of the flying rings upright and pressing a hand stand in the middle of the cross bar - a stunt that gives me the "hibbie jebbies" to this day. I can never peer into the depths of Wakulla Springs without remembering "Scotty." Somewhere I've got some photos and memorabilia of those days. I'll see if I can dig them up and get them to you or Barbara Withers Murray. Thanks again and hope the above helps with your chart. Brent Pichard"

**Bill & Carole Beavers** | 57-58/60-61 | **Response to my email about the results of is last Kayak competitions** "Jack, Amazing you were able to track that many. {I informed him that I have collected **288 FSU gymnasts'** names as potential Newsletter recipients .....jmm} Reminds me of when I retired from Ga. Tech 5 years ago. I thought I had left an indelible mark, on the university, now they have replaced my workload with three people & unlike Cheers, hardly anyone knows my name! I will try to help you track down some of the post-50's group. The Masters Nationals went well in spite of 97 degree heat. Out of the 5 events I entered I won 2 gold and 3 silvers. Our team, Lanier Canoe & Kayak Club (where they had the 96 Olympic sprint events) was 1st. Although there were 24 teams, including Hawaii and an international contingent, I had little competition, as the awards are based upon 5 year age increments. I was probably the 3rd oldest male there, so no child (old fart) was left behind on the awards stand. When you are as 'young' as I am, Its hard to take pride in beating a 75 year old even if he was a 4 time Olympian! However, I did beat 6 guys ranging in age from 30 to 45 in one of the heats, my only source of real accomplishment. Did you get a roof over your head yet? Bill & Carol"

**Charlie Christian** | 55-57 | **Email to Leigh re. Leigh's former profession on "The Wheel of Death"** " WOW!!!! Leigh, I picked up your color FAXs this morning. Hey, I have done handstands, showing off, from tall buildings and the top deck of ocean liners but your act was definitely **sensational** !!!!! I wish I could have seen it in person. It is truly unbelievable!!! How long did each performance last and where is the apparatus now? Thanks so much. Hopefully I can find someone with a color scanner so I can transfer the pics in my computer and share them with others. My best, FSU Gymkana either '56 or '57. That's when I hadn't developed a fear of heights. Getting up in age makes you think, huh!!!"

**Leigh Heisinger** | 57-61 | **Response to Charlie from Leigh** "Re: WOW!!!! Charlie: thanks for your e-mail and again, my apologies for taking so bloody long to get the stuff to you. I didn't realize your were the gymnast that did the chair act. How come you weren't in the circus??? In re your questions, the act lasted 6 1/2 minutes, and was very well choreographed to my music on tape. I think this separated us more from the other acts than anything I did. Plus the fact that I had a woman in the act (my ex, and my daughter). My ex was the first woman to ever do it, and she did it longer than anyone ever has (or probably will) 25 years. My daughter was my partner for 15 years. Other "wheel acts" (as they all became known as) perhaps did some better tricks, but the later ones were half again as wide as mine, which gave them a definite larger margin for error. The rigging itself was supposed to be the "star" and we just worked in harmony with it. I have 2 of them in my back yard loaded in trailers (the advantage of doing an aerial act Vs an animal act. The one I had built in New Zealand in 1971, then had shipped to Europe in 1976, and back to the U.S. in about '91 or so, has a plastic cover on the 16' trailer built to carry it in New Zealand. I am kind of afraid to remove the cover to see what is inside. The other is in a Wells Cargo utility trailer. It is the inventor's original rigging, and I really need to sell BOTH of them. Want to buy them and run off with the circus??? I also used to do handstands in various places, and my favorite is "Corcovada" the stature of Christ in the mountains overlooking Rio de Janiero. I did it on the stone railing below it. Good old days!!! So, that's "the rest of the story", as Paul Harvey says (does he still say it?). Thanks for your compliments, and maybe I will make it down to the get-together next year!!! See you. Leigh"

Chick & Jennie Cicio	56 years, 57 in April, 07
<b>Don &amp; Connie Holder</b>	<b>56 years, 57 in August, 07</b>
Benny & Carolyn Wallace	53 years, 54 in May, 07
Carmine & Daneen Regna	51 years,
Jim & Marlene Jackson	50 years, 51 in July, 06
Don & Patsy Rapp	50 years, 51 in November 06
Sam & Tpsi Bailie	50 years, 51 in June 07
Jon & Boots Culbertson	49 years, 50 in June 07
Jay & Ellie Schwarzman	48 years, 49 in September
Jack & Almira Sharp	47 years of marriage
Lennart & Karsthin Malmelin	47 years of marriage
Beverley & Bill Beaton	45 years
Claire <i>Essig</i> & Dick Traynor	44 years of marriage
Nancy <i>Lamb</i> & Bob Durocher	42 years, 43 in Dec. 06
Bill & Carole Beavers	39 years, 40 in July, 07
Dick & Susie Gutting	38 years, 39 in June, 07
Wayne & Heather Thompson	36 years, 37 in January 07
Derek & Nancy Lawler	35 years
Harmer & Magdalena Weichel	34 years
Jimmy & Janie Hanks	27 years, 28 in November 06

**Beverly Cude & Bill Beaton** | 55-59 | **Bev.'s FSU History to Mike Mann and J. Miles**

“Happy Saturday afternoon, Jack & Mike...I have been following, with enthusiasm, the development of the FSU Website....Mike Mann referred me to the history you created. I, too, have a bit of FSU history of which I am proud, which seems to have been lost in the shuffle, and perhaps never even recorded. I am sending Mike Mann a copy of this letter so that maybe between the two of you, you could edit my writing, and include on the site anything you deem pertinent.

Dr. Katie Montgomery's fears of damaging women's psyche through competition surfaced yet again in my case. In 1955 during my first year at FSU, I won the Women's All-around championship at the South Florida Gymnastics Championships held in November in Naples, Florida. Our FSU Women's Team Drill, of which I was also a member, took first place as well. Soon after, I was summoned to Dr. Montgomery's office to be informed that FSU would not finance or support me in those endeavors and, that if I persisted, I would risk losing the gymnastic out-of- state tuition "scholarship" granted to me by Dr. Price.

With no further funding by the university being a possibility, my competitive career was substantially diminished. Barbara, Boots and I did go, at our own expense, and on a horrendous bus trip, to the Penn State Olympic Trials in 1956. I competed listed as "unattached". For me, it was just good experience and most enjoyable. My only other competition while at FSU was at the NAAU meet held in Chicago in, I believe, 1959. My parents managed to provide the fare for me from Atlanta to Chicago, and I recall with glee how FSU male gymnasts helped to "smuggle" me by car to Atlanta. Every time Dr. Price's car came anywhere close to the vehicle containing me, I was warned to crouch down in order to avoid being seen. To Dr. Price's credit he never did question how I got to Chicago. There, I managed to place in one event: 6th on the balance beam, one place behind my fellow Canadian gymnast, Ernestine Russell, who had qualified for the Olympics in 1956.

\*\*\*\*\*Following is bit of my history from my home town of Noranda, Quebec. These events led me to FSU.\*\*\*\*\*

In July, 1955, as a member of the Noranda Gymnastics Club, I participated in the Canadian National Gymnastics Championships held in Windsor, Ontario. I placed third All-Around in the Women's Competition. The Noranda Gymnastics Club had also recently become a unit of a Czech Sokol gymnastics organization. Prior to the Canadian Championships, my team traveled to Montreal to compete against a Sokol contingent from Toronto. There, I took 2 firsts and one second place, helping our Women's' Team to take first overall in the Ladies High Division All-around.

Doing some "Googling" on the Internet, I have located a detailed, interesting history of the Sokol Movement in Canada at the following site: <http://www.radio.cz/en/article/65377> I'm sure Miroslav Ceska would be well aware of Sokol, and perhaps have been associated with the organization at some point in his own gymnastics career. I wish I had thought to mention it to him while at FSU. From the site, I copied the following underscored bit of information with regard to Sokol and its Noranda connection. When he visited Noranda, I personally met the gentleman, Jan Waldauf, named in the article below:

" Jan Waldauf agrees the protest in 1948 was the last stand. Sokol's activities then would shift to democratic countries, fuelled by new émigrés who hoped Communism in Czechoslovakia would not last. In the early 50s 'Sokol Abroad' was symbolically established to counter the dissolution of the organisation in Czechoslovakia. For their part Czech-Canadians would keep the tradition alive in Canada, holding their first 'slet' in Toronto in 1953. By earlier standards it was only a small gathering of just over one hundred gymnasts, still the message was clear. The organization was determined to continue in the face of what was happening in Prague. Meanwhile, in the 50s newer and newer units were established, one of the most curious in Quebec. "It was established in 1955, in Noranda, Quebec, a mining town, a mining city one could almost call it, and Noranda at that time certainly had one of the largest copper mines in the world. And, they had a lot of workers up there and they established a recreation centre for them. So I drove up there, about a ten hour drive from Toronto, an we did establish a Sokol unit up there that was very unusual in that only one member was Czech and one was Yugoslav."

The rest of the members were mostly French Canadians. The unit, however, did not last. "

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I think the main reason the Noranda Sokol did not last was that my coach moved to New Jersey around 1959.....no one remained to replace him. So, there you go my friends. And, Mike, do you still want me to send pictures from 2005?....and I also have a good sepiia collage that I made from the Plant City 2002 reunion...Have a good evening and rest of weekend. Bev”

**Chick & Jennie Cicio** | 54-59 | **A tribute to Chick from Dr. David Smith**

“The impressions made on all of us as kids is for life. They never leave us. Coach you are one of those people in my life. God bless you. David  
PS I will be off line for a while. Today is my last day at work in Sarasota. I sold my dental practice and won't be working. How sweet it is. Home with my children at the ranch. I'll let you know when I'm online again”

**Charlie Christian** | 55-57 | **The Spirit of Gymnastics**

“After reading *The Spirit of Gymnastics*' Frank Dennard sent I learned so much more about FSU gymnastics, Gymkana and TTT and the people who made it so successful. In my year and a half there I had no idea the influence you and the other champions, along with Doc Price, had on the growth of gymnastics. It is a book everyone should have the opportunity to read. I have yet to find anyone who learned the principles advocated by Dr. Price who wasn't successful in his/her chosen career. I am sorry the growth in the U.S. which was started in the 50's hasn't continued with the same impetus. It was nice to also find a picture of my friend and former teammate Sam Bailie there. The possibility of another team of U.S gymnasts having the influence the FSU teams had seems unfortunately doubtful. The 50's were also wonderful years for things other than gymnastics. It may be a bygone era never to be repeated. Thanks to whoever it was for including the only existing picture of my tables and chairs act at Gymkana. I felt extremely honored to be a small part of a wonderful group of “*once teammates, always teammates*” dedicated athletes. My best, Charlie”

**Jack Miles** | **50-58** | **Humility 101** My son has a class/tennis mate whose name is Tommy Cundy. As I was making copies of pages out of the 1953 FSU Annual *Tally Ho* for Mike to use in the website I put a page on the printer and noticed that on the flipside of the gymnastics page was the tennis team pictures. There pictured was Tommy Cundy as the best player on the team who I recalled seeing on campus. I called Chad over and said, "Look at this picture...see...Tommy Cundy." He responded, "Oh, yes I've seen that picture before in Tommy's house." Surprised I said, "Really? You know Tommy's dad sure has changed a lot according to this picture." Chad shook his head in disbelief at what I had just said, and replied. "Dad, That's not his father.....that's his grandfather.....oh. {There was a terrific write-up in the last *Florida State Times* on Tom Cundy and his huge successes in life. - Inspirational reading jmm}

**In Memoriam:** I also noticed that in the *Florida State Times* that **Clarence Hale** a graduate assistant coach for our 50-51-52 gymnastic teams had passed away. He was a soft spoken, gentle, lovable man and I really cared deeply about Clarence and his wife. As a matter of fact, I built a huge 20'x20', one story barn in which they raised chicken and as payment I got chickens and freshly raised vegetables for my family for a long time while I attended FSU. {Truly wonderful memories of wonderful people and times}. You who majored in Physical Education & Recreation should also know that **Dr. Pete Everett** also passed on. After graduation he was one of a handful of former instructors I had to whom I wrote and thanked for that talent they possessed which made learning such a joy.

#### **Tid Bits:**

After I had performed some gymnastics on the "Who do you trust?" Show emcee **Johnny Carson** told me he had been a gymnast on his high school team.

**Tommy of the Smothers Brothers** has a picture on his den wall of himself doing scissors on the Pommeled Horse

**Admiral Byrd** explorer of the South Pole was the captain of the Navy Gymnastics Team at Annapolis –

{I wonder if he did a handstand on the South Pole – as gymnasts are wont to do...sort of akin to a dog marking the spot.....jmm}

**Jack Miles** | **50-58** | **Excerpt from email** I told Beverley about my last Doctor's visit for my shoulders and that the Doctor was teleling me that people my age do get arthritis..He asked my age and he freaked out telling me he thought I was only in my early sixties. He made quite a fuss and even called the nurse in saying, "Look at this man he is 77 he is in great shape." He went on and on. I floated out of the room carried by my ego. But later, discovered on my bill, "10% Amusement Tax \$20.00"

**Beverly Cude & Bill Beaton** | **55-59** | **Reply to above** "Thank you, Jack, for your reply. .Great doctor you have....understand your elation....giggled at the "amusement tax"....are you serious?...or are you playing with my gullibilities as Jim Fadigan does so well, at my expense....but that's OK....it's always been in fun and laughable.....along the same lines as your doctor gave you, my doctor told me I am "remarkably well-preserved"...well, at least it's on the positive side, but I did feel a bit like an Egyptian mummy!...and that takes me back to Grade 4....my class was studying Africa in geography...never, but never will I forget the following: At age 9 I was about half the size of others my age... (never did get all that much bigger..). Well, the teacher called me up to stand in front of the class....then she announced, "Now, Beverley is about the height of an adult pygmy"....kids laughed. I was mortified and really embarrassed.....good grief! A teacher like that could be fired today! In retrospect, she was probably quite right, doggone it.....Have a good day.. : Bev"

**Jack Miles** | **50-58** | **Reply to above** "Gads! You made me laugh several times. All is true except the "amusement tax" line. And don't you dare tell Barbara I was playing with your "gullibility's" I hate your old teacher for being so blasted insensitive. On the other side of the coin my sixth grade teacher, Ms. Snyder, told me she really loved Bing Crosby. And said I looked just like Bing as she squeezed me between her boobs {in her low cut dress} and "cuddled" me for a long time when we were alone in the coat room. I vibrated for an hour.....and wow! did she smell good.....when I could breathe that is...she gave me an "A". Jack... I see you smiling."

**Beverly Cude & Bill Beaton** | **55-59** | **Reply to above** "Okay, Mr. Miles, where do I go from here? Since you know the name of your teacher (though you could have made it up)....and I can "buy" her observation, even to the point of giving you a hug, I don't quite trust you on this one. If you can see me "smiling", I can hear you make that little snicker I've heard from time to time when you tell a joke. So, I'm not falling, this time, for the second half...and anyway, how are you going to prove it, should it be true? {She must have been feeling *Deja Moo*: The feeling that she's heard this bull before....jmm}.

**Jack Miles** | **50-58** | **Reply to above** "You see, there is a wonderful Irish expression as to the definition of "Blarney" which is, "What he says he doesn't mean and what he means he doesn't say". and being of Irish extraction I can tell you that my ancestors probably stole that expression from someone else anyway. The funny thing is the story about Ms. Snyder is 100% true. The problem with being me is I tell so many tall tales just for a laugh. That when I tell the truth no one believes me. The funny thing is that I always identify with the Irish (My Grandparents on my fathers side were from County Mayo, Ireland and as Irish as patty's pig). That is even though we have traced my ancestors, on my Mothers side, back to 1640 in the States and still tracing."P.S. Shout "Hello" to Bill for me and tell him I also fought getting my hearing aid right down to the wire. Now I wish I had gotten one sooner. I love it. Side bar: I think I'll draw a cartoon showing Bill talking to his doctor after taking a hearing test - while Bev sits outside in the waiting room. In the balloon over his head Bill is saying,

"Doc, Please don't let Beverley know that my hearing is fine." ..... Love to you guys, Jack'

**VISIT YOUR WEBSITE...(fsugymnastics.org)**  
**Help Webmaster Mike Mann fill in the blanks**

## ”It was his life, Bollinger’s career culminates with Hall induction”

By Marc Correnti  
*Rockford Register Star*



Photo provided

Gymnastics coach Bob Bollinger of Rockford (third from right) poses with trampoline pupils (left to right) Ron Marriott (1976 double-mini world champion), Marilyn Stieg (second in 1974, third in 1972 in worlds), Wayne Miller (1966, 1970 world champion), Alexandra Nicholson (1972, 1974 world champion and 2002 USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame inductee), Joy Umenhofer and Robbie Bollinger in this undated photo.

**Published: August 9, 2006**

ROCKFORD Bob Bollinger sits on his living room couch staring out the window pondering his past, present and future.

The past is written; he’s one of the worlds most well-known figures in gymnastics, both as a coach and an athlete.

The present sees the 76-year-old battling terminal lung cancer, limiting his future and deciding his fate.

In 1948, he placed second in the Illinois state high school diving championships. He also finished first in the Chicago city championships and first in the Central AAU one-meter competition.

He started the first outdoor center in Sycamore and founded Trampoline Town U.S.A. In 1960, he coached Nancy K. Smith to national championship in trampoline and two world synchronized championships with Judy Wills Clinein. In 1964, he attended the first World Trampoline Championships in London, England, as USGF women’s coach. That same year, he also won the C.H. McCloy Research and the Nissen Research awards at the National Gymnastics Clinic in Sarasota, Fla. In 1965, he created the Axial-Rotation System by which all trampoline competition is judged today. The system is also used to some extent today to determine difficulty in competitive diving. In 1969, he coached Belvideres Judi Ford to the Miss America title. He also appeared with her on the Ed Sullivan Show.

In 1970, he invented the double mini-tramp. That same year, he, along with others, founded the United States Trampoline and Tumbling Association (USTA). In 1972, he was inducted into the USTA Hall of Fame and won many coach of the year awards.

In 1996, he conceived the idea of establishing a World Acrobatics Society, serving as its executive director and chairman of the Gallery of Honor Committee.

The Rockford gymnasts amazing career will culminate with his induction into the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame on Aug. 18, in St. Paul, Minn. He has looked forward to that night his whole life. Its the final chapter in a book that details nearly 60 years of gymnastics excellence. He won’t be there to see it. I’m very saddened, said Bollinger, who is hooked up to an oxygen machine. I just couldn’t do it. It means the world to me to be inducted into such a prestigious hall of fame. Bollinger’s gymnastics career began in 1937 in Shanghai, China, during the Sino-Japanese War. Bollinger, then 7, went to a reception at the British Embassy, where he witnessed an acrobatic dance performed by the Chinese 29th Army Big Sword Corps. The Chinese acrobats turned somersaults as well as other aerial tactics. I got an interest right then and there, Bollinger said. They were unbelievably fascinating to watch. They did so many tricks and acrobatics. They were a great influence.

When Bollinger returned to the U.S., he developed a springboard from an old Ford car seat. I used to spring off the seats and do aerial backwards somersaults, he said. I took some bumps, but it was fun for me. Bollinger, who was born in Kenosha, Wis., moved to Rockford in the 1940s. He continued his gymnastics career here while also starting a swimming and diving career that would rub off on his son, Rob Bollinger. Rob, who will accept the Hall of Fame honor in his father’s absence, said his dads influence helps him in his career as the artistic director of the Cirque de Soleil O Show in Las Vegas. I have him to thank for a great deal of my career, Rob said. My interest in gymnastics and swimming is all a credit to him. It was something he loved, and Im just happy to be carrying on the tradition. Bob Bollinger listed his highlights as: appearing on the Ed Sullivan Show with former pupil Judi Ford, whom he coached to the 1969 Miss America title; coaching future Olympic bronze medalist diver Ron Merriott in trampoline; the invention of the Axial Rotation System, and being inducted into the four halls of fame in three different sports.

The Axial Rotation System, developed in 1965 and still used today, helps judge the degree of difficulty in gymnastics and also in diving. The system awards one point for each quarter rotation on the lateral axis and one point for each half rotation on the longitudinal axis. Under Bob Bollingers system, a double forward somersault and a double twisting backward somersault are both worth eight points. It was something that was revolutionary at the time, he said. Its probably the thing that I’m most recognized for.

He also invented the double mini-tramp, which is a narrow 14-foot-long trampoline. You run and bounce on the first half of it before leaping over an object. It is used at the World Championships. The other halls of fame Bollinger has been inducted into are the United States Trampoline/Tumbling Association, World Acrobatics Society and World Age Group Championships. He is also the chairman of the World Acrobatics Society Gallery of Honor. To be in so many halls of fame is unbelievable to me, he said. Its nothing I could have ever imagined.

While his professional career has been marked with highlights and achievements, his health took a turn for the worse last October. Having already gone through quadruple bypass heart surgery, Bob Bollinger’s doctor discovered the cancer in his lungs. Doctors told him his condition was incurable. They did some radiology treatments that shrunk it a little bit; Bollinger said holding his index finger and thumb about a quarter-inch apart. But sooner or later its gonna take. While Rob said he is delighted and honored to accept the award on his fathers behalf, he feels melancholy heading to St. Paul. I’m very proud and happy to go there for him, but I’m sad that he couldn’t be there, he said. It was his life.