

TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY SPORTS SPOTLITE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SHANAMAN SPORTS MUSEUM

MARCH 2022 | VOL.3 NO.1



Onnie (Willis) Rogers led UCLA to three national gymnastics championships in 2000, 2001 and 2003.

Photo courtesy of Onnie Rogers.

Rogers fully understands commitment. She's a walking definition of the word. Her resume – her accomplishments – are impressive.

In 2003, Rogers was the Pac-10 female gymnast of the year, competing for UCLA. That year she led the Bruins to the NCAA national championship, as well as the regional title and Pac-10 titles. And it wasn't just a one-year fling. With Rogers dominating her events, she led UCLA to NCAA team titles in 2000 and 2001 also. She finished with a UCLA record of 16 All-American honors in her career.

(continued on page 4)

**DON'T MISS YOUR NEXT
ISSUE OF THIS NEWSLETTER!**

Renew your membership by the end
of March and be entered in a lottery
for one lifetime membership.
See page two for more details.

DEDICATION, COMMITMENT & TALENT – A RECIPE FOR AN ALL-AMERICAN GYMNAST

For Onnie Rogers (Willis), it wasn't just about talent. For her to win national titles in gymnastics at UCLA and make All-American, for her to win state titles in track while attending Tacoma's Wilson (now Silas) High School, for her to compete in national gymnastic meets and win titles, it also took dedication. Commitment.

CONTENTS

ABOUT US	2
WELCOME NEW MEMBERS	2
MEMBERSHIP LOTTERY	2
LOCKER ROOM CHAT	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	3
PERKINS CYCLE SERVICE	5
RECOVERING TREASURE	7



SHANAMAN Sports Museum

The mission of the Shanaman Sports Museum of Tacoma-Pierce County is to recreate the history of sports in the community by chronicling the evolution of various sports through written, visual and audio mediums and to educate the public about our sports heritage.

Board of Directors

- Marc Blau, President
- Colleen Barta, Vice President
- John Wohn, Secretary
- Terry Ziegler, Treasurer
- Tom Bona
- Gary Brooks
- Brad Cheney, Emeritus
- Jack Connelly
- Kyle Crews
- Vince Goldsmith
- Don Gustafson
- Dave Lawson
- Doug McArthur, Emeritus
- Chelle Miller
- Gregory Plancich, Emeritus
- Earl Powell
- Terry Rice
- Kate Rue
- Aubrey Shelton
- Willie Stewart
- Bob Young
- Leonard Zarelli, Emeritus

Staff

- Megan French, Museum Curator
- Julia Auve, Assistant Curator
- Adrian Ann Cufley, Membership & Website Manager
- Kim Davenport, Communications Manager/Newsletter Editor

Contact Us

www.tacomasporthmuseum.com
marc@tacomasporthmuseum.com
 (253) 677-2872

Follow Us

Facebook & Instagram: TacomaSportsMuseum
 Twitter: SportsMuseumTPC

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

SPONSOR

- Michael McNeil – Windermere Professional Partners
- Tom Merry – Rainier Asphalt & Concrete

COACH

John M. Bodenhamer

TEAM

- Terry Beckstead
- Karl Benson
- Brad Cheney
- Tom and Sara Hayward

MEMBERSHIP LOTTERY

All new and renewed memberships received before the end of March will be entered into a drawing for one lifetime membership.

Submit your membership today and perhaps it will last forever.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.tacomasporthmuseum.com/membership

The Shanaman Sports Museum honors the history of sports and the rich culture of athletics in Tacoma-Pierce County. To maintain that tradition, the board of directors is pleased to invite the public to show their support by becoming a member.

DONATE

Your financial support is welcomed, visit our website to learn more:

www.tacomasporthmuseum.com/waystogive

THE LOCKER ROOM CHAT

www.tacomasporthmuseum.com/lockerroomchat



www.rainierasphalt.com

The Locker Room Chat is a video interview series that highlights athletes, coaches, officials, teams and great events and accomplishments in the history of sports in Tacoma-Pierce County. Upcoming episodes brought to you by our sponsor, Rainier Asphalt & Concrete.

Upcoming episodes will premiere at 9am on the dates listed below, and then remain available for viewing on our website and YouTube Channel.

www.tacomasporthmuseum.com/lockerroomchat

Sunday, February 20, 2022

Joe Stortini-1948 Soap Box Derby Champion, highly successful baseball player, national champion slowpitch player, Mt. Tahoma HS football coach and all-around athlete at Lincoln HS and CPS.

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Dean Nicholson—Basketball coach at Puyallup HS, Cheney Studs AAU team and CWU

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Marv Harshman---Star football player for PLC and the Tacoma Indians pro football team and successful and respected basketball coach at PLC, WSU and UW.

Sunday, April 3, 2022

Ken Still, Golf professional on PGA tour for 23 years, competitor on the Senior Tour, a member of the 1969 U.S. Ryder Cup team and longtime supporter and ambassador for Tacoma-Pierce County athletes.

Recent episodes you may have missed

2-part interview with John Zamberlin, Linebacker for PLU & Kansas City Chiefs and football coach at CWU.

Lloyd Blanus, all-star fastpitch softball pitcher with the Irwin-Jones Dodgers team of the 1950s.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tickets On Sale Now - Limited Seating



March 20 – 2:00-6:00pm

**The Last Hurrah-Tacoma-Pierce County
Baseball-Softball Oldtimers Banquet**

McGavick Conference Center

www.oldtimerbaseball.com

For more information:

253-677-2872 or mhblau@comcast.net



May 17 – 5:30-8:00pm

**Tribute to Champions
Distinguished Achievement Awards and
Tacoma-Pierce County Sports
Hall of Fame inductions**

McGavick Conference Center

www.tributetochampions.org

For more information:

253-677-2872 or mhblau@comcast.net

Rogers, cont. from page 1

As a sophomore in 2001, Rogers became UCLA's first NCAA all-around champion. Topping off her impressive career at UCLA, she earned the Honda Award as the nation's top collegiate gymnast. Her career-high score in the all-around competition was 39.80 out of a possible 40.00.

For Rogers, sports – gymnastics and track – were more than just exercise and competition. They taught her important life lessons, things like how hard work can lead to success.

“After completing 20 years as an athlete, now as a coach, I am beginning to recognize the richness that athletics offers both for participants and spectators, and the incredible opportunities it has provided for my life,” Rogers said.

Prior to starting at UCLA, Rogers won a Junior Olympic national championship in the all-around, vault and balance beam.

Rogers, who graduated from Wilson in 1999 and was inducted into the Tacoma Pierce County Sports Hall of Fame in 2005, wasn't just an impressive athlete. She also took care of business in the classroom. She won the Arthur Ashe Sports Scholar Award in 2002 and 2003 and was named to the Pac-10 all-academic first team. She was also named as a National Association of Collegiate Coaches Scholastic All-American three times.

Rogers' accomplishments in gymnastics didn't come easily. From the start, when she was still in grade school, she was committed to getting better. She was driven to do her best. “From the time I was about 10, I trained 20 to 25 hours a week,” Rogers said. “So, I always had a very big chunk of my day occupied, and whether it was homework or time with friends, it all had to fit within the remaining hours.”

At Wilson, Rogers was more than a spinning whiz in gymnastics. Besides being an A-student in the classroom, she also turned out for track. She ran sprints and did the long jump and the triple jump. Of course, she wasn't mediocre in track. She set state records in the triple jump, breaking her own record in the event numerous times. She represented the Wilson Rams at the state track championship meet three years in a row. She won a state title in the triple jump in 1999 and placed third in the long jump. She was a team captain for the Rams in track and was a four-time team MVP, showing her leadership skills.

With her commitment to gymnastics and the classroom, Rogers learned to make the best of her time.



Onnie Rogers was UCLA's first all-around NCAA champion and earned NCAA Academic All-American honors four times. Photo courtesy of Onnie Rogers

“I've never had free space, and the life of an academic is similar in that writing and doing research is a constant chunk of time that you need to spend,” said Rogers, who is now a professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. “Everything else has to fit in around it.”

Rogers also went beyond the classroom and beyond gymnastics. She was also a mentor. While at UCLA, she gave talks on tours to intercity children and escorted them to sporting events. She was also a volunteer for the Bruins for Relief Program, which gathered donations at football games that were used for scholarship money for children of September 11 victims. And she served as a camp counselor at the UCLA Unicamp for underprivileged youth.

Rogers, who now lives in Chicago and teaches psychology and education at Northwestern, began her impressive career in gymnastics at an early age. She was just 3 years old when she started doing somersaults and twists and turns in gymnastics. At 4 years old, Rogers began training at the Puget Sound School of Gymnastics. For the next 14 years, Rogers continued to train at the Puget Sound School of Gymnastics. Her years of hard work had a pay day – a full scholarship to UCLA.

While she was clearly an elite gymnast, Rogers decided during her junior year at Wilson not to pursue a spot on the U.S. Olympic team. It was a tough decision to let go of that previous dream.

“I was on the national team at the time,” Rogers said. “I did consider the Olympics. I remember making a very explicit decision to let go of that dream. And then I really started to focus on college. So, I sort of took a step back. Focused on going to high school.”

It turned out well for Rogers as she excelled in college.

Rogers, who has two daughters ages 6 and 10, no longer does gymnastics. No more flipping and jumping. And she's put coaching her daughters aside. She's now the cheerer and the encourager. “I don't coach gymnastics anymore; my daughter is more advanced than my coaching skills,” Rogers said. “But I love watching her compete.

She's at level 6 now, cracking high scores of 9.75 on balance beam and floor.”

Just like Rogers did at Puget Sound Gymnastics 30-plus years ago.

By Gail Wood, contributing writer for the Shanaman Sports Museum and former sports writer for The Daily Olympian.

DICK PERKINS CYCLES FROM DAD'S PROCTOR STORE TO NATIONALS



Art and Ruth Perkins, Dick's parents, originally owned a Bicycle and Washing Machine Service Repair shop on Proctor before getting rid of the washing machines and began to just service and sell bicycles. Photo courtesy of Dick Perkins.

Dick Perkins recalls his father the way most parents hope they'll be remembered by their children. Kind. Generous. Hard working. Encouraging. “I was always so impressed by how he treated other people,” Perkins, 86, said of his dad, Arthur Perkins. “I believe I got a lot of who I am from my dad.” Art Perkins didn't ride bicycles, but he kept the wheels spinning for many Tacoma residents in the 1940s and '50s as the owner of Perkins Cycle Service.

Dick's first job was helping his dad around the Proctor District shop and, decades later, his fondest memories of the place center around his dad. "I remember how pleased people were," Dick said in a recent phone interview. "They'd bring in bikes in terrible condition and my dad restored them to a usable form. And they were so pleased to get their bikes back in that condition."

And Dick remembers the many occasions parents came in to get bikes repaired for their children only to discover they couldn't afford the service. "I don't know how many bikes my dad fixed at no charge because he thought every kid needed a bike."

Art started out as a cook living in Sumner and working in Puyallup. Dick remembers marching with his dad and other cooks in a parade when he was a child. "I dressed up like a cook, too, but I was the only kid out there," Dick said. "It was a real plus for me."

Art eventually grew tired of life in the kitchen and started looking for a new career, Dick said. That's when Art bought an old hardware store in the Proctor District and used the building to launch Perkins Cycle Service.

By the late '40s one of the trademarks of the shop – in addition to the shops skilled and generous owner – was a sleek and expensive Schwinn Paramount racing bike that hung from the ceiling.

Dick used to admire it when he worked cleaning and repairing bikes with his dad. Eventually, Dick decided he wanted to race bikes. His dad set him up with a good bike, and Dick was off and training.

He took training rides along Point Defiance's Five Mile Drive, the waterfront and up North 30th Street (a hill still used for training by Tacoma cyclists and runners). He took longer rides out to

Enumclaw, where he'd go for a swim at Pete's Pool and then ride home. And once when his mom (Ruth) and dad drove to Pe Ell to visit family, he followed them – all 100 miles – on his bike. Soon he developed into the best sprinter in the state.

All along the way, his father supported him. Art let his son leave work early or come late so he could train. And, one day, to show his admiration for his son's hard work, Art pulled that expensive Schwinn Paramount from the ceiling and gave it to Dick.

In June 1949, Perkins took the new bike to a quarter-mile track at what's now Peck Field and won the junior Washington Amateur Bicycle League Championship. He won the race again the next three years, each time winning all-expense-paid trips to nationals. He raced in San Diego, New Jersey and twice in Columbus, Ohio. One year, he was interviewed by ABC's Wide World of Sports.



In 1949, Dick Perkins took his new bike-- with tubes sewn into the tire and glued to the wheels — to a quarter-mile track at what's now Peck Field and won the Junior Division of the Amateur Bicycle League Championship bicycle races in 1949 and again in 1950. Photo courtesy of Dick Perkins.

In a 2017 interview with the TNT, a reporter asked if he felt like a bit of celebrity during this time. His response: "It was not like being a football star or a basketball star. I went to Stadium (High School), and even though I rode

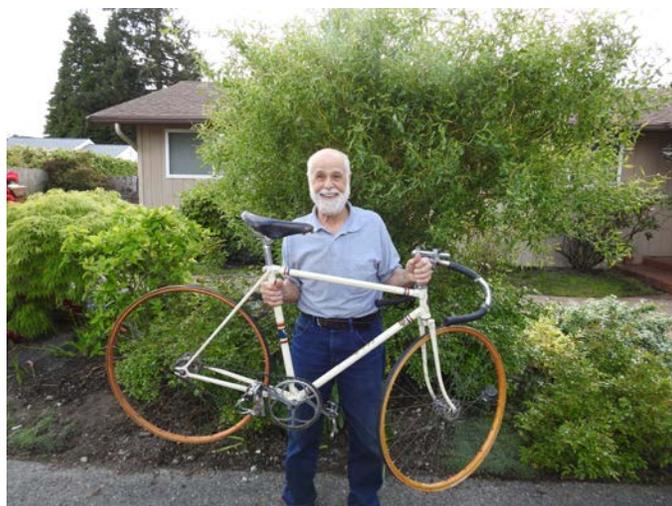
my bike on the track, it was not recognized as anything. If you were a jock, you wrestled, you played football or you swam. And I didn't do any of those."

As for the results at nationals, Perkins told the TNT, "I did not do very well because the competition was fantastic." He retired from bicycle racing in 1952, before enrolling at the University of Washington and then joined the Army. He taught biology for 25 years at Tacoma Community College.

Today, Dick is retired and enjoys going on walks and bird watching. His father may have passed away long ago, and Perkins Cycle Service is long since closed, but the memories of both bring Dick much joy.

"I feel so supported by my dad, especially when I won those state championships and he would go with me and act as my coach and my hander," Dick said. "It was really a blessing to have that kind of support, especially as a 13-, 15-year-old kid. I was pretty lucky."

By Craig Hill, contributing writer for the Shanaman Sports Museum and former sports reporter and outdoor writer for The News Tribune.



RECOVERING A 70-YEAR-OLD TREASURE

When collecting and preserving history, conversations sometimes lead down unexpected paths. A memory sparks a search for a long-lost artifact or inspires a back story behind an event or accomplishment. The accompanying story about Dick Perkins is an example of the serendipity that comes from connecting via a shared history. It helps explain why we should continue to support a local sports museum to connect generations.

When Marc Blau visited Dick to learn more about his time as a nationally competitive cyclist, he asked Dick if he had the bike that he used to win races in 1949 and 1950. Dick wished that he had kept the Schwinn Paramount, but he wasn't sure what became of it. Later in the conversation, Marc asked if there were any other friends still around that he raced with. Dick mentioned Ralph Graves. "Ralph and I rode together a lot. He was good at the distances, but I usually won because I was a good sprinter and would finish strong at the end of the races." Dick suggested that Marc talk to Ralph, who Dick had not seen in years.

During the subsequent conversation, Marc shared that Dick wished he had kept the Schwinn. Ralph looked up, surprised, and said, "I have it. It's been hanging up in my garage for the past 60+ years. When he left for college at the University of Washington he asked me to take care of it, so I did."

Marc called Dick and encouraged him to go visit his old friend, Ralph. Ralph took Dick out to the garage and pointed to the Schwinn Paramount hanging in the same spot. It was a thrill for Dick, who then decided that the bike would make a nice display to help tell a story, so he donated it to the Shanaman Sports Museum.

