

Twelve Short Years

On Friday December 6th the Temple Administration under President Neil Theobald announced that seven athletic programs would be dropped effective June 2014. Athletic Director Kevin Clark would make the announcement to a hushed audience of athletes in a hastily arranged afternoon meeting in the student pavilion and just days before the start of final exams. Why they didn't wait until Saturday the 7th – Pearl Harbor Day – to sink the Temple crew along with men's gymnastics and five other programs is anyone's guess. Then again they have demonstrated little knowledge or concern for institutional history. Just earlier that afternoon individual conferences were scheduled with the coaches notifying them of the proposed cuts. Classy!

Among the seven to be cut was the Men's Gymnastics program at Temple University which in twelve short years will celebrate a 100th anniversary since inception in 1926. Men's gymnastics at Temple is now in its 88th year it has produced remarkable success both athletically and academically. Over the years Temple gymnasts have gravitated into law, medicine, business, education, and the arts at a level that would make any institution proud. In that time only six coaches have mentored the Owls (Harry Nelson (HOF), Max Younger (HOF), Carl Patterson (HOF), Bill Coco, Dave Thor, and Fred Turoff (HOF) each leaving their indelible mark on Temple.

A champion gymnast, now in his 38th year at the helm of Temple men's gymnastics, perhaps no coach has provided better a example of leadership and an ideal vision of an intercollegiate athletic program than Fred Turoff. A lifetime coaching record of 432 wins against 184 losses (70%) his teams his teams have captured 18 ECAC Championships and made numerous NCAA appearances since his tenure began in 1976. He has produced 34 All-Americans and 5 NCAA individual champions. In fact, 4 individual NCAA champions, 10 conference championships and 10 All-American gymnasts have come since the program was threatened in 1994. Among all college gymnastics programs Temple gymnasts have had the 2nd highest number of Academic All-America Scholar-Athletes behind William & Mary. The Owls have had the highest gpa among all Temple athletic programs over the last three years and were among the top three nationally of all gymnastics programs. In recent years Temple Men's gymnastics has been honored by the NCAA for its academic excellence and graduation rate – a remarkable legacy for a program not fully funded and only expected to compete regionally. Since 1986 Fred has raised in excess of \$500,000 in an effort to offset operating costs and endow the program in perpetuity. While the administration has proposed a cost savings of 3 to 3.5 million dollars by cutting seven athletic programs the entire operating budget of the men's gymnastics program including coaching salaries and scholarships (4) is less than 1% of the total costs.

This remarkable eighty-eight year legacy is one that is too proud to ignore or forget. The names that follow are merely a microcosm of the richness of Temple Men's Gymnastics. It reflects not only their character but also their pride in Temple Men's gymnastics and Temple University. The list could easily be multiplied two hundred times or more. A quick read will show that it has been money well spent. The question remains – has Temple have seen the value?

SAVE TEMPLE MEN'S GYMNASTICS!

Tom Gibbs (68) – A Temple MVP gymnast (67) he has been an assistant men's gymnastics coach for the Owls (1970, 1986, 1998-2006) and now serves as a volunteer coach.

Bill Braverman as a walk-on would become Temple's EIGL champion capturing the EIGL tumbling title in 1934. In 1998 the Braverman Award was established and presented to a senior gymnast In Recognition of Personal Achievement and Contributions to Temple University Gymnastics. In a letter about the award he would describe how as a walk-on how legendary coach Max Younger would provide all necessary support to help him fulfill his dream of becoming a gym teacher. He would even serve as a freshman coach at Temple, which assisted him during the depression years to pursue graduate studies at Temple. Starting in 1941 Bill would go on to teach, coach, and serve as a department head and athletic director on the Philadelphia school system for 35 years.

Chet Phillips would capture 3 consecutive EIGL all-around titles for the Owls (35-37) and become a member of the 1936 US Olympic Team. Chet would go on to a distinguished career as the Gymnastics Coach at the US Naval Academy, winning several conference championships and producing a number of All-America gymnasts. He was later selected to the Helm's Hall of Fame as well the first gymnast elected to the Temple's Hall of Fame (1969). His son Tim would captain the 1964 Owls to an EIGL Championship and an NCAA appearance.

Sam Fogel, a Temple HOF inductee (1981), was an integral member of two EIGL championship teams (1939 & 41) capturing numerous individual EIGL medals and championships. After Temple he served in WWII where he would use his gymnastics skills to pole vault out of a prisoner of war camp in Nazi Germany. He would go on to a distinguished teaching and coaching career at both West Philadelphia and George Washington High Schools spanning 35 years while mentoring countless numbers of young gymnasts (one in particular – Penn State gymnast Steve Cohen, a West Philadelphia grad & two-time NCAA all-around champion and 1968 Olympian).

Joe Schabacker would also be a member of the 1941 EIGL champion Owls team and a 1943 conference champion. He would enlist in the Marine Corp in 1942 and after graduation from Temple in 1943 be commissioned a Second Lieutenant and serve during WWII. He continued serving in the reserves for 33 years attaining the rank of Colonel. Dr. Schabacker would go on to earn his M.B.A. and Ph.D. from UCLA becoming Vice-President of Arizona State University and Professor-Emeritus before his retirement.

Bob Stout would enter Temple after serving in the medical corps in the South Pacific during WWII becoming one of the most decorated gymnasts in the history of Temple. He would lead the Owls capturing 9 EIGL titles during his career from 1947-49 and graduating early. It is a record shared by only one other Owl in history. When the Owls won the 1949 EIGL championship Temple was unable to fund their trip to the NCAA Championship California the EIGL Trophy was placed in Mitten Hall and donations were collected from the student body. The Owls would raise sufficient funds and go on to capture the school's first NCAA Championship. In all Stout would win two individual NCAA titles and after graduation capture the National All-Around Title in 1952 to represent the US at the Helsinki Olympics. He would repeat his national all-around title in 1953. One of the most distinguished gymnasts in Owls history he would have a highly successful career as an educator in the Philadelphia and Abington School Districts. He was inducted into the Temple Hall Of Fame in 1974.

Joe Berenato, stricken with infantile paralysis at age thirteen months, would overcome his disability as a member of the Owls capturing not only two EIGL titles on pommel horse but also an individual NCAA event championship as a member of the 1949 NCAA Championships team. After graduation he worked for the U.S. Army Signal Corps, Spar Engineering, and then General Electric for 33 years. He was a Hall of Fame inductee in 1998.

The 1961 Owls would never realize their championship dream but would reveal their true character as strong as any championship team (Len DePue, Lou Datilio, Mike Gorn, Steve Holden, Shelly Mittman, David Pearlstein, Bob Mueller, Wally Graham, Bob Smith). Traveling to the Naval Academy for the EIGL Championship they were refused service at a popular roadside restaurant because a member of the team was African-American. En masse they would leave the restaurant. For his part **Bob Smith** would place 1st on horizontal bar the next day becoming the first African-American to capture an EIGL title. It had 11 years since an Owl had won an individual EIGL event. A few weeks later he would become an All-American gymnast on horizontal bar at the NCAA Championship held at the University of Illinois. Bob would go on to successful careers in the arts and entertainment fields capturing a significant role in Alex Haley's TV Documentary "Roots". Mentor to many, there was no better teammate, friend, or human being than Bob Smith.

Mark Cohn was a local product and a true scholar-athlete. Having graduated from Central High School where he began his gymnastics career, he would become Temple's MVP gymnast in 1963, 64, and 66. He would lead his team to the 1964 EIGL, as the Owls would upset heavily favored Penn State to earn an appearance in the NCAA Championships in California. He became an All-American capturing 2nd place all-around at the 1966 NCAA Championship and was the all-around champion in both the 1965 and 69 Maccabiah Games in Israel. As a member of the USA Team he captured the Gold Medal on pommel horse at the 1967 Pan American Games. He was a president's scholar and recipient of the ECAC Award for Scholarship and Athletic Prowess. He was elected to Temple's French and Mathematics Honor Societies and Temple's Sword Society. He earned a graduate degree from Michigan State University and Ph.D. from Temple working years for the university in Testing & Measurements department He was a 1982 Hall of Fame Inductee.

Mike Silverstein became a five-time All-American gymnast competing at Temple from 1974–78 capturing four individual EIGL titles. He was a four-time national champion and a member of the 1978 U.S. National Team. He was a winner of seven international medals (two gold) and a qualifier to the World Games Trials in 1978 and the 1980 Olympic Trials. He received an NCAA postgraduate scholarship (one of only five in the U.S.) and after graduation from Temple Law School practices law in Toledo, Ohio. For some time completed research and wrote opinions for the Ohio Supreme Court. Mike was inducted into the Temple Hall Of Fame in 1999.

Dominick Minicucci along with teammate Bill Roth would spearhead the Owls to nearly a decade of successful EIGL championship teams at Temple. **Minicucci** transferred to Temple from the University of Illinois where he had already helped the Illini to an NCAA championship while capturing a berth on the 1988 Olympic Team. As an Owl in 1991 he would earn a place on the US World University Games Team that would capture a team bronze medal and the US Pan American team where he would win an individual gold medal. At Temple he would win three individual EIGL events plus the all-around competition in 1992. A few weeks later at the NCAA Championship at the University of Nebraska he would capture an individual event title on the parallel bars and later that year earn his 2nd spot on the US Olympic Team, this time as an Owl gymnast competing at 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. He currently works for the Fahnestock Brokerage firm on Wall St. and has served on the finance committee for the USOC. He was inducted into the Temple Hall Of Fame in 2007.

Bill Roth was one of the most decorated Owl gymnasts in the history of Temple sharing a total of nine EIGL titles with Bob Stout. Together he and Dominick Minicucci would spearhead Temple's march to nine consecutive EIGL championships. At the 1990 US Olympic Festival he would earn a record tying seven medals and at the USA Championships that same year receive a perfect score of 10.0 on horizontal bar from the judges. He was a member of the USA Team at the 1994 World Championships in Dortmund, Germany, and a member of the Gold medal Pan American Team in Mar del Plata, Argentina where he would also earn two individual medals. In 1996 he again represented the U.S. at the World Championships in San Juan Puerto Rico. After his gymnastics career he worked as a sports entertainer for several professional franchises and today is a very successful private gym owner in Delaware County, PA. Both Roth and Minicucci were NCAA All-American gymnasts with Roth being inducted into the Temple Hall Of Fame in 2006.

Danny Akerman was the epitome of a student-athlete, excelling as a gymnast and a student during his Temple career. He was a three-time NCAA qualifier in the all-around competition and helped the Owls win three consecutive EIGL titles in his three seasons at Temple. He was an EIGL event champion in 1994 and 1995 would capture the all-around title in 1995. He was an NCAA All-American on the pommel horse and an All-America Scholar Athlete for his 3.99 average as a risk management/finance major. He represented Israel at several European and World Gymnastics championships. Since leaving from Temple he earned an MBA from Columbia Business School with the highest distinction and worked for JP Morgan and Credit Suisse in New York. He currently an Executive Director for Goldman Sachs in Israel and was inducted into the Temple Hall Of Fame in 2012.

Carl Imhauser was an outstanding student-athlete earning All-America Scholar-Athlete status during all four years at Temple. He was the EIGL and the NCAA champion on the horizontal bar in 1996. He majored in electrical engineering and was named the GTE District 11 Scholar-Athlete all four years. A team captain in both his junior and senior year, Imhauser helped the Owls win four consecutive EIGL team titles. In 2004 he earned a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Drexel University and today is an instructor in the Biomechanics Department at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. He was elected to the Temple Hall Of Fame in 2011.

Kenny Sykes would begin his gymnastics career at Temple with very modest skills but develop steadily to become a champion gymnast several times. During his gymnastics career at Temple he would win a total of 7 EIGL medals including individual titles as a freshman on horizontal bar and floor exercise as a sophomore. As a senior he would capture the EIGL all-around title becoming the 17th Owl since 1935 to do so. He co-captained the team as a senior helping the 1997 Owls to their 8th consecutive EIGL team championship. He would also qualify as a member of the US Senior National Team in 1996 & 97 and made numerous appearances at NCAA Championships. He was an All-America Scholar-Athlete during all four years at Temple and was a delegate to the NCAA Leadership Conference in Orlando as a senior. He continued to train toward national and international events while doing his post-graduate work at Temple. He would leave Temple with a Ph.D. in chemistry. Following his studies at Temple he earned a both a Ph.D. and medical degree from the University of Iowa and now works a specialist in pain management in the Saint Louis area.

Darin Gerlach would enter Temple as a walk-on from Lancaster, Pennsylvania with no financial aid. By the end of his sophomore season he would be the EIGL champion on floor exercise. But it is what he had to overcome that would define his character and strength as an individual that stands out. An all-around gymnast with outstanding skill on floor exercise and vault he would suffer a devastating knee injury after his junior year that left any future competition in doubt. He would not only repeat as EIGL floor exercise champion as a senior but would advance to the 1998 NCAA Championship at Penn State where he would capture 1st on floor exercise to become the 5th individual NCAA champion under Fred Turnoff's tenure as Temple coach. He was an All-America Scholar-Athlete all four years at Temple. He would graduate from Temple with BS in Mechanical Engineering and later earn an MS in Biomedical Engineering from the University of Kentucky and an MBA from the University of Memphis. Today he is the VP of Marketing for BioD, LLC a regenerative medicine company.

Michael Ast would begin his gymnastics career at Temple as a walk-on from Staten Island, New York. While his skills were initially limited his determination and enthusiasm were never a limiting factor to his advancement. By his junior year he would work his way into the line-up on three events contributing regularly to his teams 2002 EIGL championship. His tremendous leadership ability didn't go unnoticed by his teammates as they voted him co-captain in 2003 as the Owls captured another EIGL title and placed 10th at the NCAA Championship in the Liacouras Center. He would never win a conference medal but his impact on his team was huge. He was named All-America Scholar-Athlete three consecutive years by the College Gymnastics Association and at graduation was named the Outstanding Scholar-Athlete. A graduate of Temple Medical School he recently completed his residency at Long Island Jewish Medical Center and is now an orthopedic surgeon with Mercer Bucks Orthopedic and is affiliated with St. Mary's Medical Center in Langhorne, Capital Health Medical Center in Hopewell, NJ and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in Hamilton, NJ.

Alex Tighe is merely the latest in a long and storied tradition of both academic and athletic success at Temple. He was a recruited gymnast and already talented as a freshman. His impact was immediately evident in his first year of collegiate competition. He would win a conference title in both his sophomore year (horizontal bar) and his junior year (parallel bars). In both his junior and senior season (2012 & 2013) he would be instrumental in leading his team to EIGL conference championships. As a senior he would be acknowledged as a finalist for the prestigious Nissen-Emery Award given at the NCAA Championship to the nation's outstanding senior gymnast. He was recognized by Temple as the top athlete in the Athletic Program in 2013. With a dual major in applied mathematics and Spanish he was a 1st team All-America Scholar-Athlete all four years at Temple graduating with a gpa above 3.90.

Notables

NCAA Championship – 1949

EIGL Championships – 1935, 1936, 1937, 1939, 1941, 1949, 1964, 1968, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2008, 2012, 2013

NCAA Final 4 Appearances – 1948 (2nd), 1950 (2nd), 1968 (4th), 1970 (3rd)

Chet Phillips (TU-HOF), USA Gymnastics HOF

US Olympic Team (1936); Naval Academy Coach

George Szypula (TU-HOF), USA Gymnastics HOF, Michigan State HOF

EIGL & National Champion (1943) – Coach @ Michigan State

Coach of Dave Thor (68 Olympian & Temple's 5th Coach)

Bob Stout (TU-HOF), USA Gymnastics HOF

US Olympic Team (1952); NAAU All-Around Champion (1952 & 53),

NCAA Champion (1948 & 49)

Mark Cohn (TU-HOF)

All-American, EIGL Champion, Two-Maccabiah All-Around Champion (1965 & 69); 1967 Pan American Gold Medallist

Fred Turoff (TU-HOF), USA Gymnastics HOF, Jewish Sports HOF

EIGL All-Around champion (1968), US World University Games team (1970),

US World Championship team (1970)

Pete DiFurio (TU-HOF)

All-American; Nissen Award (Nation's Outstanding Gymnast - 1970)

EIGL All-Around Champion (1970)

Barry Weiner

EIGL Champion; Coached Cal-Berkeley to two NCAA Championships (1997 & 1998)

Olympic Coaching staff (2008)

Miles Avery

Temple walk-on, USA National Team member (1983-84)

Head Coach @ Ohio State – NCAA Champions (2001)

US Olympic Coach (2004 & 2008)

Dominick Minicucci (TU-HOF)

EIGL & NCAA Champion (1992), US Olympic Team (1988 & 1992)

US Pan American team (1991) – individual Gold Medal

Bill Roth (TU-HOF)

EIGL Champion, US World Championship Team (1994 & 96), US World University Games Team (1993), US Pan American Team (1995) – Team Gold

Dubie Bader

EIGL All-Around champion (1994) & individual event champion (1995)

Orthopedic surgeon for Penn State Athletic department

Dave Frank (TU-HOF)

EIGL Champion (1994 & 95), NCAA Champion (1995)

Carl Imhauser (TU-HOF)

EIGL champion (1996 & 97) & NCAA Champion (1996), Four-Time All-America Scholar Athlete & All-American

Darin Garlach

EIGL champion (1996 & 98), NCAA Champion (1998), Four-Time All-America Scholar-Athlete and All-American

Mike Moran

EIGL All-Around champion (1998), All-American, US Pan American team (1999) Team Silver.