

Cheryl Hamilton has been a member of NAWGJ since 1976. She started gymnastics as a young girl and was a collegiate athlete at Fairmont State. After graduating, she married her former high school sweetheart and moved to Delaware where she took a job coaching in a local gym. The club owner told Cheryl she needed to become a judge because the league they belonged to required each team to bring a judge with them to meets. Cheryl didn't feel she had much choice because she wanted to keep her job. So, she took a weekend judging course with Audrey Schweyer, passed the test at the highest level possible, and became a Nationally rated judge.

Soon after she started judging, Carol Ide told Cheryl that her area needed a State Judging Director and she should take on this responsibility. Cheryl was afraid to say no because Carol seemed like someone important and felt she'd better do it. That led to a ten-year stint as SJD.

Just a few years later, Cheryl volunteered to be a judge assistant at the 1979 World Championships when they were held in Fort Worth Texas. This proved to be an important event for Cheryl because she got to work with Jackie Fie who was impressed with Cheryl's professionalism. In 1980, Jackie invited Cheryl to the elite judging course. In 1984, Audrey called Cheryl and told her that Jackie Fie had selected Cheryl to go overseas to attend an international judging course. Although she wasn't exactly sure what this meant, Cheryl thought it would be fun to go and see what it was all about. Little did she know that it would result in her becoming a social media rock star! But more on that later...

Cheryl was asked to be a judge assistant at the 1984 Olympics and a line judge at the 1996 Olympics. Ever since then, Cheryl has been a steady presence at World Championships, Championships of the USA, and other major international competitions.

Cheryl continues to be active in the Junior Olympic program by judging in Region 7 and at invitationals across the country. She also judges the JO National Championships where she serves as Meet Referee. These meets give her the opportunity not only to see some of our up and coming gymnasts but also to observe the impact of the rule changes she helped to develop in her role as Chair of the USA Gymnastics Women's Technical Committee.

After the Code of Points is changed, Cheryl helps to prepare the test for the National and USA Brevet courses. She says that teaching these courses has been one of the most enjoyable parts of her judging career.

Cheryl is forever grateful to her husband of 44 years for supporting her every step along the way. Cheryl also treasures the friends she has developed through gymnastics: judges, coaches, and athletes. Her friends are numerous and she considers these friendships to be priceless. When asked to describe the impact judging has had on her life, Cheryl said "it has given me the opportunity to meet some of the most wonderful people. I have judging friends that will be friends for life."

One of the highlights of Cheryl's judging career has been the opportunity it has given her to travel internationally. She judged her first international meet in Moscow in 1987. Recently, she judged the 2014 World Championships in China, the 2015 World Championships in Glasgow and the 2018 World Championships in Doha, Qatar. In Qatar, she had time for a few excursions, including riding on a camel that made her glad she had developed good balance skills through gymnastics.

Cheryl has judged the most prestigious of all competitions in gymnastics, not once but twice. She judged the London Olympic games in 2012 and the Rio Olympic games in 2016. In Rio, Cheryl was the D1 judge on balance beam, one of the most challenging jobs of the meet.

For all of the impressive accomplishments in her life, it's the 2012 Olympic Games for which Cheryl will be remembered as legend. Cheryl's reaction to this outstanding vault got caught on video. It went viral and the rest is history.

Cheryl, while the world may remember you for your response to Makayla's vault, we will remember you for the contributions you have made to the judging community for the past 45 years. Your work has had an impact on every single judge in the United States. Your contributions will affect our members for years to come. Even though the scores you give in the elite world are in the teens, we give you the highest score possible in our world. Cheryl, you have earned a perfect 10.00. Congratulations on your selection to the NAWGJ Hall of Fame.