



**Evelyn Chandler**  
***Steering NAWGJ Forward***

NAWGJ President Evelyn Chandler, who took office in January 2011, will retire from the position in spring 2020. Despite personal setbacks in these ten years, including the death of her husband, Ernie, Evelyn has worked with the National Governing Board and its At-Large Directors to steer NAWGJ into the independent, technically updated and forward-thinking organization she knew it could become.

A diver-turned-gymnast at Penn State University in the 1960's, Evelyn embarked on her long education career by accepting a physical education teaching position at Norwin High School in Pennsylvania, where she also coached diving and gymnastics. In 1970 she was asked by Bud Gianinni's Monessen Sokol club to judge. "There was no rule book," Evelyn says. "We used three judges on each event, averaging all three scores. For the first routine my score was in the middle and I thought, I can do this!" She notes that although judges were not paid, they could have anything from concessions they wanted!

There were few meets at that time, mostly Sokol, high school and Turners, but some high level gymnasts were trained, including future Florida SJD and longtime judging buddy Cindy McLane. Club gymnastics was just beginning to bloom.

Evelyn attended a judging clinic at the University of Pittsburgh in 1972, taught by Delene Darst, and took her first judging test. "I received a Regional rating," she recalls. "I thought I was hot to trot!" She joined NAWGJ for \$15 in 1974. "I thought, *I am in—I am now a professional.*" In 1976, she received a National rating and in 1978 traveled to the second NAWGJ Symposium in Santa Barbara, California—paying her own way.

Evelyn also began judging college meets in 1974 and has been an active NCAA official since; she also served as one of the original JAS assigners. "I love to see how much the young ladies who were compulsory gymnasts just *yesterday* grow and mature into strong athletes at the collegiate level."

In 1980, she moved to Orlando, Florida with her husband, Charlie, and started teaching at Evans High School. She found herself in the middle – literally - of a 12-Judge factioned State, and her "fresh neutral face" catapulted her into the SJD job with a treasury of \$8. "I got a map and put pins in where my judges were," she recalls. "I didn't know Florida very well or any distances. The first thing we had to do was attract more judges because I believe that you get quality when you have quantity. We sent out flyers, asking for anyone with a gymnastics background to take the test." With Rita and Kevin Brown opening a club in Gainesville, and the LaFleur's starting a club in Tampa, the Florida club scene started growing, and so did Florida NAWGJ. She stayed in the job until 1992, following Charlie's death in 1991.

Meanwhile, in 1985 Evelyn was invited to the FIG Course in Los Angeles, where the participants judged live gymnasts. "We judged a routine, handed in our score, and then the panel would announce their score. There was a lot of crying," she remembers, "even at the wine party at the end where judges received scrolls with their results." In 1994, Evelyn's elite rating was upgraded to Brevet.

On the education front, Evelyn received her masters degree in Education Curriculum at the University of Central Florida in 1992 and switched from teaching to school administration. In 1993 she married her second husband, Ernie, a soccer coach she had met at Evans High School. After getting her PhD in Administration at the University of Central Florida, she became the assistant principal at Ocoee and Apopka Middle Schools and then the principal at Olympia High School in 2001. She would go on to become the Director of Curriculum and Associate Superintendent for Orange County Public Schools in 2002.

Evelyn was elected to be Region 8's RJD in 1992, succeeding Mary Lou Dillard. She joined the National Governing Board to serve under Presidents Dale Brown, Yvonne Hodge and Carole Ide. After leaving the NGB for four years, she came back as Vice President in 2004, replacing Judy Grenfell, and then, after retiring from her education career, succeeded Carole Ide as President in 2011.

“We had work to do, despite my personal hurdles,” she notes, referring to Ernie’s sudden illness. “NAWGJ wasn’t changing with the times.” The addition of a Director of Finance position to the Executive Board, and with it a Financial Policy in the Operating Code, spearheaded other projects, such as online membership and online voting, along with improvements to the NAWGJ web site.

Using the administrative skills honed from her years in education, Evelyn also improved relationships with USA Gymnastics and the NCAA coaches. The National Governing Board needed direction, too. “I wanted them to start thinking nationally, not regionally,” she says. “Their job is to think of the whole organization and propel us forward.”

Looking back on her long judging and NAWGJ career, Evelyn sings the accolades of gymnastics people. “You can be in trouble in any State, and there is always someone you can call. Whenever I experienced a personal crisis, it was gymnastics people who came to my aid.” She regularly socializes and travels with longtime judging friends – even attending the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016 and the Ryder Cup in 2018. Evelyn recently moved to a new home southeast of Orlando, bringing her two little doggies along, and plays golf several times a week.

Evelyn’s dedication to term limits has also influenced her decision to retire. “It’s healthy to know that you can pass the baton. New candidates may not do things exactly as you would but they will bring new ideas. It’s good for any organization to involve as many members as possible.”



Evelyn at home with her Pups!



Chipper & Mia



*NAWGJ President  
2011 - 2020*



### **Bonnie Butsch: There for the Pleasure of the Performer**

Current Connecticut Co-SJD Bonnie Butsch has spent the last five decades in gymnastics as a competitor, judge and coach. It was Chickie Poison, a fellow women's field hockey official, however, who spoke the words that most influenced Bonnie. "She said that officials are there for the pleasure of the performer," Bonnie recalls. "It's all about the gymnasts, not us."

Bonnie began her gymnastics career in East Lyme's Junior High School, where two physical education teachers—who knew little about the sport at the time—began a gymnastics club in the mid 60's. "We were a small but mighty group of kids who loved gymnastics," she says. Since East Lyme did not have a high school, Bonnie and her friends worked out at the same club at the Junior High until they had learned enough to compete in AAU meets in nearby Connecticut towns such as Milford, Guilford and West Hartford. Bonnie notes, "Muriel Grossfeld actually judged our AAU meets!"

Bonnie packed off to Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois for two years prior to getting married and having her first child. "The physical education department asked *me* to teach gymnastics, as they did not know too much about the sport." She also worked part time at the Parks and Recreation Department in St. Charles, Illinois. After moving back East, Bonnie finished her BS degree in Physical Education, Health and Recreation at Southern Connecticut University in New Haven and began teaching in public schools.

The next years were spent having three more children, which led to a break in her teaching career. In the early 1970's, Bonnie was recruited to take a judges' course taught at Southern by Joan Hicks and Sharon Valley, who were both coaches at Muriel's gym in New Haven. She tested well enough to earn an Associate rating. "You were awarded a rating based on your test score," she explains. "I didn't think I would ever judge, but by then high school gymnastics had begun, and I was being asked to judge meets. My friend, a fairly new judge herself, told me to get a piece of paper, put "M" for Medium on one side and "S" for Superior on the other, and to make a checkmark for every skill I saw!"

Bonnie joined NAWGJ when it formed in 1974. She also bought the royal blue uniform, which she knows she still has *somewhere* in one of her closets! She was elected to the NAWGJ Connecticut State Governing Board, serving as the high school liaison. Soon, State-rated Bonnie started spending her winter weekends driving to meets, which was a nice break for a mother of four young children. "My friends couldn't understand what judging was all about or why I was traveling around, sometimes in bad winter weather." The judges had fun, too – once, at a stop at McDonalds in their royal blue uniforms, the McDonald's cashier asked them what NAWGJ stood for. Without blinking an eye one of the judges responded, "Oh, it stands for the National Airlines of West Germany and Japan!"

When Bonnie resumed her teaching career, she added two masters degrees to her accomplishments, one in School Health and the other in Educational Leadership. She eventually became a department head and then a school administrator, retiring in 2009. During this busy time, Bonnie achieved her National rating and has

been honored to judge at the Regional level in addition to many invitationals. She served as the Connecticut State Judging Director for four years in the mid-90's and attended several NAWGJ Symposiums, east coast to west coast. She plans to go to the 2019 Symposium in Ft. Worth, Texas. These days, she especially enjoys judging college meets, as well as coaching part time.

Bonnie would like to keep judging as long as she can. "The SJD job is a lot of work, but I have a great Co-SJD, Theresa Nolan, and a hard working State Governing Board. Gymnastics is one of the most beautiful sports on the planet. I feel very fortunate to be actively involved in the gymnastics community."



**Connecticut Co-SJD's Theresa Nolan and Bonnie Butsch**



**Carole Liedtke**  
***Judging Thoroughbred***

When veteran Kentucky judge Carole Liedtke found out that her XCEL Regionals volunteer assignment in Lexington would conflict with the Kentucky Derby celebrations in Louisville, she packed her Derby hat so she could wear it at the meet!

Since 1960, Carole has amassed a trophy case full of accolades and awards in gymnastics, running and golf, including those from the University of Louisville, the city of Louisville, the YMCA, NAWGJ, the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, and USAG.

Her career began as a dancer (tap, acrobatics and jazz), but a Scandinavian PE teacher at Pleasure Ridge Park High School in Louisville began the first women's high school gymnastics program in Kentucky. Boys' equipment was retro-fitted, and the team, which Carole joined, competed in Indiana and even Canada. When Muriel Davis (Grossfeld) came to do a clinic shortly after the 1960 Olympics, "she opened everyone's eyes and motivated people to start gymnastics."

There was no gymnastics yet at the University of Louisville, where Carole received her B.S. in Health, Physical Education and Biology (she received her M.A. in Physical Education at Western Kentucky University in 1970), so she continued to dance, even touring armed forces bases in the US and the Caribbean with a USO-type troupe. Later, though, she competed for the college while also competing for the Louisville Gymnastics Club.

In 1965, every team had to bring two judges. "They handed me a rule book," she laughs, "and I judged. I would judge the juniors in the morning and then compete in the evening—sometimes near midnight!" She even competed in a couple of meets after marrying her college beau, Joe. "We met at a dance," she says, "and we're still dancing 52 years later."

Carole started teaching at Moore High School and also coached the gymnastics team, which won the State meet several times. She also coached the University of Louisville team, one of three college teams in Kentucky at the time, winning Regionals and qualifying for Nationals many years.

As Carole and Joe settled into married life and began their family, her judging career took off. She took the National judges test and as well as the FIG Course in 1972, where the judges took oral tests and judged live gymnasts. Carole traveled internationally for many years, judging in Africa, China, Belgium, England, Holland, Italy, Puerto Rico, Sweden, France and Canada. "Every meet was different," she muses. "At the Student World Games in England, everyone marched in like the Olympics, and we used little telephones to call in our scores. In France we judged the whole meet sitting in one section of the stands. In China, I was just glad I had brought my peanut butter!"

Carole joined NAWGJ in 1974, and after serving many years in Region V USAG roles, she was elected as the Kentucky SJD in 1985. She moved up to RJD in 1995, retiring from the National Governing Board in 2007. Carole is famous for bringing bags of goodies for her SJD's to the NAWGJ meetings each year. "I tried to make the SJD's feel important and respected. I wanted them to feel that they were doing the best they could with their State's judges." Carole is currently on the Kentucky NAWGJ State Board.

She also volunteered in Atlanta in 1996. "It was a highlight to work on the floor. I had made it to the Olympics!" she laughs. She also attended the Munich and Montreal Olympics.

After coaching at the University of Louisville until 1982, when the program was dropped, Carole converted their barn into “Barnastics” and for several years trained gymnasts and cheerleaders and ran a dance studio. She was also busy tending to three children. Many of her students along the way have become coaches and judges, including her daughter, Tiffany. “We’ve had some reunions, and hopefully I motivated them in their gymnastics. Now we’re seeing their children in the sport!”

Carole became a USA-Brevet judge in 2006 and has continued to organize and run many Kentucky state and regional clinics and symposiums. She has also attended most of the NAWGJ Symposiums. “National Congresses are great, but there isn’t the same camaraderie.”

These days, Carole and Joe stay busy with their seven grandchildren and volunteer at the local YMCA, library, church, golf league, local police academy and church thrift shop. Her love of adventure and travel has led her to hot air ballooning, skydiving, scuba diving, golfing, ballroom dancing, cruising, and zip lining.

And yet, she still finds time to judge. “I enjoy getting together with judges,” she says, “even to study for tests.” She tries to provide guidance without being too much in control, and reminds them about the importance of professionalism, as past experience makes a difference. “And I remind the younger judges to let me know if I make a mistake, but they tend to not want to say anything to me!”

Next May, when she’s not judging or volunteering, Carole will be back in Louisville, wearing her Derby hat, eating Derby pie and sipping a mint julep—minus the bourbon! The gymnasts are never far from her thoughts: “Keep the gymnasts and their hard work in mind when you are giving your scores. Be consistent and fair to all.”



*Carole coaching Louisville Moore High School gymnastics team.*



*Royal Blue at a meet in the 1980's. Carole is standing.*



*Carole & her Region 5 SJD's: Georgette Dupke, Carol Arnaut, Jeanne Johnson, Judy Kemp, & Nancy Barley SJD Workshop, late 1990's*



*Carole with Yvonne Hodge & Carolyn Bowers Italy, 1998*



*Carole, in Derby wear, hangs out with former KY SJD, Michael Crowe, Region 5 Xcel Regionals 2019*



## **Janet Packwood: California Girl**

Brevet judge and former NAWGJ SJD and RJD Janet Packwood has spent all of her 46 year judging career in Region I—specifically Sacramento, California. Legendary Oklahoma judge Betty Roberts, whose family was running a business in Sacramento in the early 70's, recruited Janet when both Betty's daughter and Janet's daughter, Ashley, were gymnasts at Agile-Lites. "She took me out of the stands at a meet," Janet recalls, "and said 'you're a judge now'. My sports were track and basketball! I had to work hard to learn everything, but it was worth it."

Janet is from Eugene, Oregon, and she met her husband, Ray, at the University of Oregon, which was right in town. They moved to Reno for a few years, to be near his parents, but settled in Sacramento to expand their retail clothing businesses. "*We Fit the Hard to Fit* – that was our motto," she explains. They owned a Red Wing shoe store, Mr. Big and Tall, and Men's Limited (for shorter men). Even today, Janet and Ray still work at the stores part time.

After taking her first judges' test, Janet's gym-mom life became a bit more complicated, as she was working at the stores during the week and judging on weekends. She joined NAWGJ in 1974 and bought the uniform. "K-Mart Blue," she laughs, "You could wad it up and stick it in your bag and it would come out without a wrinkle!" She remembers a lot of uniform variations back then, especially white skirts or pants.

To further judging in the area, small monthly clinics were organized by the likes of Judy Smith and Shirley Anderson, mostly at people's houses. "Shorthand came into vogue, so that helped a lot," Janet says. "Back then meets were not as long. We judged compulsories in the morning, took a lunch break, then judged optionals in the afternoon."

Janet also attended the 1978 NAWGJ Symposium in Santa Barbara, her first of many. Soon after, she began traveling around California to judge age group and college meets. She recalls that many junior colleges had teams back then. Traffic was always a problem, though, especially to the Bay Area from Sacramento. "We would get home after midnight sometimes," she notes.

One of her fondest memories is helping at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. "We wore yellow and pink uniforms with white tennis shoes," she remembers. She served as a scorer in the women's competition venue and also as a runner for rhythmic gymnastics. "Peter Ueberroth (U.S. Olympic Organizing Committee) was very good to us. He was so appreciative. And, we had a big reunion the next year."

Janet was SJD for Nor Cal for a few years before she became Region I co-RJD with Joan Geel in 1995 for two terms. After that, she was the sole Region I RJD for two more terms. "When I first got in there as SJD," Janet laughs, "Dale Brown, who succeeded Joanne Aschenbrenner as NAWGJ's President, initiated me by make me the chairman of the first Judges' Cup in Reno in 1989!" That weekend also marked the first SJD Workshop, held in conjunction with the meet. She recalls a crazy time trying to set up the gym in 103 degree weather, but they managed to make some money.

Janet was a member of the National Governing Board for 16 years, handing the RJD job over to Cindy Lord in 2011. Among her favorite activities was chairing the “NETTIE” (NAWGJ Network) awards committee with fellow thespians Joan Geel and Mary Lee Martin. In 2014, Janet was honored as a NAWGJ Lifetime Member. “It was a great run and I do miss it and all the wonderful people I worked with.”

These days, besides judging and working part time, Janet lends support to breast cancer patients at UC-Davis, having survived breast cancer herself over twenty years ago.

“There were some excellent role models through the years,” Janet reflects, “like Jackie Fie, Connie Maloney, Delene Darst, Joanne Aschenbrenner and Yvonne Hodge. They were great people who made gymnastics important to me.”



*Janet & Joan Geel enjoying lunch.*



*New Lifetime Member Janet  
with Fran Earles & Patty Shipman  
2014 Atlanta NAWGJ Symposium*



*Janet with her fellow Nor Cal judges.*



## **KATHY KUHN: In the Right Place at the Right Time**

Brevet judge and Louisiana native Kathy Kuhn has spent the past 45 years shuttling between Region 8 and Region 3, courtesy of her husband Albert's career in IT Management. In every new city, however, she seemed to land where she could benefit from the local coaches, judges, and clinicians. Later, the opportunity to judge regional and national NCAA and USA Gymnastics meets, Elite Zone meets, and Classic meets came her way in several states. "I always seemed to be in the right place at the right time," Kathy says.

Growing up in New Orleans, Kathy was not a gymnast but a dancer. She majored in Physical Education at Southeastern Louisiana College (now the University of Southeastern Louisiana) in Hammond, where she met Albert.

Their first move was to Huntsville, Alabama, where Kathy began teaching high school. A fellow teacher, Miss Ramona Jones, started a gymnastics team and hired Kathy to coach because of her dance background. "We learned with our team," Kathy recalls, "We had primitive equipment—men's parallel bars, grey horsehair mats, a pommel horse for vaulting. Later we got some panel mats, but the wrestling team took their mat away whenever they needed it." She began traveling around Alabama and met Lynette Calvin in Sylacauga, who was the pioneer of Alabama gymnastics. "She was our inspiration for learning about the sport," Kathy recalls.

When she was a spectator at one of the meets, Kathy and others were pulled out of the stands because judges were needed. "They said, here's a pen and here's some paper, give us some scores!" Back then, everyone used the same rules with medium and superior skills. Kathy eventually attended a judging clinic in Atlanta run by Delene Darst and Deb Guy (later Kornegay), who demonstrated the compulsory routines. There was a written test for both compulsories and optionals, and a film. Since Kathy hardly knew what a compulsory was she didn't pass that part, but tested successfully the next time from a test given by Ernie Weaver, former Canadian Olympian who later coached at the University of Florida.

Armed with a regional rating, Kathy judged both high school and club meets in Alabama, even judging her own gymnasts. Judges often worked alone then, considering the shortage of rated officials. Her team won the newly-instated Alabama State High School championship two years in a row in the early 70's, and a coach at a junior college near Huntsville even gave scholarships to a few of her gymnasts.

A move to Houston, Texas soon followed. Kathy quit teaching public school when her son, Alan, was born, but she soon began teaching pre-school gymnastics at a local recreation center. By this time, NAWGJ had formed, which she joined in 1974. "I was late with the second year payment, so I only got credited with joining in 1976," she laughs. Joanne Aschenbrenner, future NAWGJ President, modeled the prototype pieces of the new uniform at a subsequent National Congress. "Everything looked good on Joanne," Kathy says, "There was even a striped jacket." More successful pieces included the Association Blue skirt, jacket and reversible vest. Meanwhile, Kathy judged a lot of club gymnastics and college meets local to Texas. When the Karolyi's came to Houston to buy a club and establish their ranch, Kathy and others judged future superstars like Mary Lou Retton, Shannon Miller and Dominique Moceanu. By the mid 80's, Kathy had achieved her Elite rating and began judging a wider group of college meets. She credits former NAWGJ President Yvonne Hodge for pioneering an assigning system for the SEC, which led to the current JAS.

It was back to Region 8 in the early 90's after her son graduated from high school in Houston. This time they moved to Boca Raton, Florida, where Kathy worked with Tim and Toni Rand. "Tim and I taught *Mommy and Me* classes together," Kathy laughs. "He invented a lot of the pre-school circuits."

Four years later they moved back to Texas, this time to Austin, where she taught pre-school classes at Jim and Cheryl Jarrett's gym, Capitol Gymnastics. And, being at the right place at the right time helped out again, as their elite gymnasts provided an opportunity to critique optional and compulsory routines. With the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta approaching, many elite and Brevet judges were recruited as judging assistants on the competition floor. Kathy volunteered for a month and was assigned to vaulting. "The assistants wore khaki shorts and white shirts with green and blue leaves," she remembers, "I had to pick up all six score slips and make sure they were filled out correctly. The FIG was switching to computer scoring but judges still had to fill out slips as well as enter scores into the computer." She was there to see Kerri Strug vault when injured and was near the floor when the U.S. team received its gold medal.

The next January, a slip on the ice that resulted in a broken hip messed up her plans to attend the Brevet Course in Indianapolis. After a call to Jackie Fie, Kathy was allowed to attend the Course in New Zealand, staying with one of the vault judges at the Olympics. "They were excited to have someone from America come to their Course," Kathy remembers, "They also gave me a tour of New Zealand."

For many years, Kathy judged international meets in Trinidad and Tobago along with her pals Rene Niccollai and Judy Grenfell. She also judged the Olympic Festival in St. Louis. In the late 1990's, Kathy and her husband moved a last time, to Boulder, Colorado, where they stayed eight years. When her husband retired, they moved back to Abita Springs, Louisiana. Kathy still enjoys judging club and college meets, sometimes with Albert in tow if he can coordinate the trip with an interesting golf course! Her son, Alan, is now a veterinarian in Alabama who brings Kathy and Albert's granddaughters, Emmy and Ava, for frequent visits.

"Gymnastics is a beautiful sport – I wish I could have been able to do it! Moving all over the country like I did, I found judging friends wherever I went."



***1996 Atlanta Olympics Judging Assistants  
Kathy Kuhn, Mary Lou Dillard, Myra Elfenbein,  
Donna Stuart, Amy Rager, Judy Grenfell***



***California judge Piper White with Kathy,  
USAG Nationals in Baltimore, 2002***



***Kathy (top row - right) and Louisiana Judges  
enjoying their Holiday Classic 2018.***

## ***PIONEERS IN JUDGING***

A series of portraits leading up to the National Symposium:

*New Frontiers: Steering Our Path Forward*



### **Lesley Ogg: Learning from the Best**

When Lesley Ogg was teaching physical education in junior high school back in Newton, Massachusetts in the late 1960's, she didn't imagine that a curious interest in gymnastics would develop into a lifelong commitment to the sport as a coach, Brevet judge and USAG Officer.

Her map, however, was simple: gather knowledge from the best coaches around, starting with Newton High School's excellent gymnastics coach, Dr. Joe Massimo. "I just listened and learned," Lesley says. Later, she went to clubs and camps to learn as much as possible from prominent national coaches like Bill and Ginny Coco (Mannettes), Bill and Donna Strauss (Parkettes), and Muriel Grossfeld, a former Olympic gymnast who coached the Olympic teams in 1968 and 1972.

In 1970, Lesley relocated to Colorado to get a master's degree in counseling and education from the University of Denver and began teaching high school there. She also worked into a part time coaching position at The Denver School of Gymnastics, run by Rod and Debbie Hill. At that time, Debbie was training hard for the 1972 Olympics. She made the team, Lesley recalls, but was later replaced by Cathy Rigby. Rod Hill went on to become an assistant Olympic coach in 1976.

"I started with beginner and intermediate kids," she recalls. "But their program was amazing, especially the elite program. The Romanian and Czech teams came in for competitions." Several DSG gymnasts were successful at the national level.

Lesley started traveling to invitationals with the club when it was standard practice to bring a judge along. "Nobody wrote anything down, there was no feedback, no paper, no classes," she says. About a year later, however, Lesley and many others, including current Region III RTC Carol Bunge, took a judging class from Sharon Weber and soon passed the Class III and II judging tests.

Another big influence was Longmont, Colorado's Joanne Aschenbrenner, who was the first National Secretary of NAWGJ and its President from 1980-1984. Later, FIG's Jackie Fie asked some of the judges, including Lesley, to audit and eventually attend the elite course, where Lesley received her Brevet rating.

The Hills sold the club in the late 1970's and left to coach the team at Brigham Young University. Lesley's direction in life also changed when teaching days became intolerably long, so she quit to become a travel agent. Soon after, she took some sports medicine classes back at the University of Denver as well as an EMT class, and went to work in the emergency room of a local hospital. Eventually, she became an ER unit coordinator, which

involved a lot of computer work and “transcribing orders from really bad handwriting.” Lesley retired from the position in 2012, but she has continued to do work with the hospital’s trauma committee, culling patient data.

Since 1975, Lesley has not only judged but also contributed to Colorado gymnastics by serving as the State USAG Chair from 1975 to 1982 and as the Region III Technical Chair from 1984 to 1992. She then served for eight years on the Colorado State Board as education coordinator and secretary.

Lesley continues to judge State Meets, Region III Championships, and the large invitationals in Colorado, which attract many of the best gymnasts in the country. The journey from Massachusetts, however, hasn’t been all about gymnastics education. “I’ve met some wonderful people,” Lesley says of her long career. “I’ve judged some very fun meets, especially the ESPN Challenge and the Olympic Festival. And I’ve had the opportunity to travel, visiting all of the cities on my bucket list!”



### Summer Friends

*Lesley (second from right, bottom row) with some illustrious summertime friends, among them Joanne Aschenbrenner, Judy Bodman and Nichole Otterson, Colorado's SJD.*



### “Pink Meet”

*Lesley joins her fellow judges at a recent "pink meet" in Kansas City*



## **LOIS COLBURN: Bridesmaid's Luck**

At least three times in her long judging career, Lois Colburn benefited from a bit of luck. "You never know when something good is around the corner."

The first time was at AIAW Collegiate Nationals at Louisiana State University in 1978, when she was unexpectedly handed the chief judge position due to a fellow judge's illness. The second time, she was asked to judge the 1980 Independent Club Nationals as a last-minute replacement. And then in 1984 she again replaced someone at UCLA to judge her first NCAA meet, which allowed her the thrill of judging in Pauley Pavilion the year of the Olympics.

Her luck continued, however, when she was asked to attend the FIG Course in Texas in 1985 because someone could not make it. "Jackie Fie called me 10 days before the course. I had my Code of Points but had to cram!" she laughs. "The live gymnasts they used were freezing, as Texas was experiencing a cold snap."

Lois began her gymnastics career at the YMCA program in Wakefield, Massachusetts. "We competed against other 'Y' teams around the State," she recalls. "My junior year, our coach, Bob Rein, pitched the idea of high school gymnastics teams to the members of the board of education. The boys got their team, but the Board said they didn't want the girls in the gym in our leotards around the boys!"

She attended Tufts University in Medford, but they had no girls' team there, so she worked out with the YMCA team whenever she came home. After graduating, she began to teach middle school physical education in Burlington, MA. She also worked out with the high school team—one of Massachusetts' first girls' high school teams— and helped coach. "There were only about 8 or 9 teams in 1967 in Eastern Massachusetts," she says, "And each school had to find a person to take the judging course."

That person was Lois, who took the course from Virginia Cullity and then the written exam from the AAHPER-DGWS (American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation/Division of Girls' and Women's Sports) officials. After judging high school meets for a few years, Lois started training other officials with the Boston Board of Women's Officials. "I've been training judges my whole career," she notes.

In the early 70's, Kitty Kjeldsen, who was the coach at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, was offering statewide judging courses. Lois joined 20 other women for a judging course and test at Springfield College. "We judged live routines right along with Kitty and her staff." She received a Regional rating and kept judging high school, emerging club gymnastics meets and local college meets, like Salem State College.

When Kitty helped form NAWGJ in 1974, Lois was appointed Massachusetts' first SJD. Her RJD was Gail Davis, who was the coach at Southern Connecticut State University. In 1976, Lois was asked to attend her first elite national course in Ohio, taught by Delene Darst, Sharon Valley and Gail Davis. This test included an oral exam. "You sat in front of two of the instructors and answered test questions," she remembers. "And then there was a live practical exam." Lois received an Elite National rating and traveled to bigger meets. "Our regional elite meets (Region VI) were combined with Region VII, and that is where I first got to know judges from outside of New England: Cheryl Hamilton, Carole Ide, Jenny Sperling, and Sue Ammerman. We also were expected to attend all of the regional elite meets whether we were judging or not."

Beginning in the summer of 1977, Lois helped out at a week-long coaching/judging course at Tufts University and by 1983 had become its director. "I spent the early summer in Maine each year typing up a written judges manual from all the random judging rule notes that were available."

Lois took over the Regional Judging Director's position in 1978, which she held for eight years. She also traveled to Santa Barbara to attend NAWGJ's second National Symposium. "Betty Sroufe had a beachfront unit and we sat on her deck, looking at the ocean." She also remembers playing a lot of tennis with other attendees.

A year later, Lois made a memorable trip to AIAW Nationals at State College, Pennsylvania. "Unfortunately," she recalls, "it was the weekend of the 3 Mile Island nuclear accident in Harrisburg, and I flew to the meet with a stop in the Harrisburg airport." In 1980 she returned to Pennsylvania (Allentown) for the Independent Club Nationals (see photo).

Later in 1980, Lois attended the third NAWGJ Symposium in Miami, Florida. "The best thing about that Symposium was the introduction of the international shorthand system for judging."

After her two terms as RJD for Region 6, Lois served as the NAWGJ liaison to Judges Certification, Inc. (JCI). "They were a wonderful group," she says. She has since served as meet referee at NCAA Nationals numerous times and has been a clinician at NAWGJ and USAG congresses and clinics through the years. She also became one of the first regional collegiate assigners for JAS. "I was very excited about the creation of a judges assigning system in 2005. I thought that there needed to be more neutrality in the assignment of collegiate officials – that schools should not be hiring their own judges. My schools during those first years were LSU, Nebraska, Centenary, Oklahoma, Denver and Air Force."

After she received her FIG rating in 1985, Lois traveled internationally, visiting places she never thought she would see, like Puerto Rico, Italy, Japan and Israel. "Coming into Jerusalem, overlooking the city – that was amazing!"

Lois had begun working for Tufts University part time in the mid-80's, then settled in as a Director for the Tufts Veterinary School (Grafton) in 1993. She credits her NAWGJ work as the best training for being an administrator.

She retired from Tufts in 2015. "Judging is a perfect retirement thing," she notes. She even returned to her roots and resumed high school judging! She and her husband, Peter, who is a former men's FIG judge, have five grandchildren and spend six months of each year at Peter's ancestral home on the Maine coast.

"Gymnastics has been an avocation for almost 60 years. It has brought me wonderful experiences, travel opportunities and many friends all over the country. At least four of the most memorable events happened because I was an alternate for the meet and could accept at the last minute. Sometimes being a 'bridesmaid' is worth it!"



## **Judging Independent Club Nationals - Allentown, PA 1980**

*(L to R) Audrey Schwyer, Sharon Valley, Delene Darst, Patsy Knepper, Lois Coburn, Marilyn Sheldon, Carole Ide*



**Judging in Action! 2011**



**2013 P&G Championships**



**Lois (2<sup>nd</sup> from R back row) with her fellow Massachusetts Judges  
Boston Strong Meet 2014**



**Time to Relax!**

**St. Louis Botanical Gardens with Marilyn Blilie, Denise Green, & Jenny Spering**



### *Marilyn Does It All*

Delaware *Judge Emeritus* Marilyn Schnaars can pull up a lot of stories from her 55- year judging career. One of her favorites is when she arrived to judge the 1967 AAU Nationals in New Orleans. Meet director Vannie Edwards expressed concern that the judges would not be familiar enough with the new compulsory routines, but Muriel Davis (Grossfeld), told him, “Oh, don’t worry, Marilyn is here! She can go out and walk through the routines!” And after dropping her suitcases, that’s exactly what she did.

Marilyn has truly done it all, coaching and judging at the international level since she began her gymnastics career back in the late 50’s at West Chester State Teachers College in Pennsylvania. Trained as an acrobat, dancer, swimmer and diver (she was a national diving champion both in college and AAU), she reaped the rewards when the West Chester athletic department bought the equipment after hosting a gymnastics women’s team trials in 1959. “I could tumble, but I had to learn the other events,” Marilyn says. “I justified switching over to gymnastics because as a future teacher, most schools would have a gym, but not many would have a pool.”

Marilyn’s future husband, Dick, was the captain of the gymnastics team. She performed with Gym-Karma, an exhibition group, to promote women’s gymnastics in the area, and later competed at AAU meets. She even competed against Muriel. “She always won, but I was right behind her!” she laughs.

A teaching career at Roslyn High School beckoned. “My father took me up to Long Island so I could interview with Dr. Jack George. He wanted me to start a girls’ gymnastics program, so I took the job.”

After four years of teaching and coaching at Roslyn, Marilyn accepted a position at Carle Place, Long Island. She spent the next 30 years not only teaching school but also enhancing their girls’ gymnastics program (she retired in 1997).

In 1964, Marilyn and Richard were married, and they moved to Bethpage, Long Island. It wasn’t long before Marilyn took advantage of the beautiful new Lutheran High School facilities in the evening to become the head coach for the Metropolitan Athletic Club, starting a team called the Lu Hiettes.

Eventually, she and Dick opened one of the first gymnastics clubs on Long Island, which became the home of The Pirouettes. “You were not allowed to use your last name in AAU,” she recalls, “So it couldn’t be Schnaars Gymnastics Center.”

Encouraged to judge by Don Wilderoter (the father of gymnastics on Long Island), Marilyn met other prestigious gymnastics people in the area, like Marilyn Cross, Audrey Schweyer, Kitty Kjeldsen and Cheryl Hamilton, and earned her FIG rating. She judged many AAU National Meets as well as the National Sports Festivals. At the same time, she and Dick took their Pirouettes gymnasts over to international meets in Germany, Mexico, France, Yugoslavia and Romania. She also accompanied two gymnasts to China in 1982 with USGF’s Gary Goodsen.

Her other accomplishments include serving as the Metropolitan Area AAU Chairman from 1969-mid 80's, and helping to start the Empire Games in New York in 1978, which was held for 22 years. She assisted at international workshops and meets held in the NY area, including one at Madison Square Garden. She also attended the Olympic games in Montreal and Los Angeles, and many world championships. She served as the JO Chairperson in Region 6, earning the Regional service award in 1990. A Marilyn Schnaars Gymnastics Award was established by the Nassau County High School Association on Long Island to recognize outstanding contributions to gymnastics. She also received the Sports Crown Trophy Award from Stony Brook University.

Marilyn remembers attending the second NAWGJ Symposium in Santa Barbara, California (1978). "That was fun! You could look out and see the ocean and then run in to study." She has attended most of the Symposiums since then, and will attend the 2019 Symposium in Ft. Worth this summer.

When Marilyn and Dick retired to Delaware, she got to know RTC Myra Elfenbein, nearby Pennsylvania judges Marcy Blitz and Terry McGirk (now co-SJD's), as well as Barb Cutillo; she also reconnected with Cheryl Hamilton. Dick stays home with the dogs, and Marilyn, now a National judge, still judges a lot - even three day meets. In fact, she goes to the gym regularly to make sure she is fit to judge.

"When I started this, well, I had no idea!" she laughs. "I got in at the grass roots level at West Chester. I just wanted to be part of this sport. I love to see the kids, their parents and especially all the judges I have gotten to know and mentor throughout my career. Life is good!"

Marilyn had one more thing to do: she had never been to Kansas, so when Marcy and Terry asked her if she wanted to attend the 2019 National Judges Cup in Kansas City in January, she pulled on her red boots and got on the plane. "I clicked them together three times at the Kansas City airport!"

## ***PIONEERS IN JUDGING***

**A series of portraits leading up to the National Symposium:  
*New Frontiers: Steering Our Path Forward***



### **Pam Zak: The Judge in the Boat**

When three hurricanes and one tropical storm made life on Hawaii rough and wet in August and September, longtime judge and native Hawaiian Pam Zak had no worries: she is a former outrigger canoe paddler and competitive open ocean swimmer. “The ocean is kind of like a friend,” she says, “You go out and get in it, and it’s all around you, but you’re free.”

Another sport caught her eye first, however. After attending a demonstration and clinic at the University of Hawaii by the West German gymnastics team in the late 60’s, Pam was inspired to learn enough skills to try out for a newly formed gymnastics club, Kokokahi, in AinaHaina near her Honolulu home. There was one catch – she was 24 and married! “I was the only one who could keep her feet off the floor in glides on the bar, so I made the team,” she laughs, “but fear chased me out after a few months.”

Pam soon joined in the movement to develop women’s gymnastics in Hawaii. When Connie Maloney flew over from California to give the judging test (all levels in one test), Pam passed with a State rating so she could judge meets, although there were only three clubs on Oahu and one in Hilo, on Hawaii. She judged current Hawaii SJD, Pattie Walkabout, at that club for many years.

In 1974, Pam joined NAWGJ at its inception and bought the uniform soon after. “I liked the royal blue color and the bell-bottomed pants,” says Pam, “and nothing wrinkled!” She also attended the second NAWGJ Symposium in Santa Barbara, California in 1978.

The State Judging Director job beckoned that same year, but instead Pam became the Hawaii USAG State Chair, a position she *still* holds. Pam recalls that early meets in Hawaii were small due to the limited number of gymnasts—and judges—but soon high schools added girls’ gymnastics competition, using modified USAG rules, and more clubs popped up on Maui and Kauai. Meanwhile, Pam used her growing judging and administrative skills to nurture the gymnastics scene on the islands and help prepare the athletes to compete in State and Regional meets. Hawaii was originally assigned to Region I but transferred to Region II in the early 80’s. “June Houghton, the Region II RJD, suggested to me that we switch,” Pam recalls, “She knew we would fit in better with States like Oregon and Alaska.”

Even with a limited budget, Pam has brought in top clinicians from the mainland, especially the west coast, to educate Hawaii’s coaches and judges. She also judged Region II Championships for many years, representing Hawaii, and has continued to judge club meets on the various islands (high school competition ended 12 years ago.)

Athlete that she was, Pam began competitive open ocean swimming in her 30’s and also outrigger canoe racing, paddling in both regatta and long-distance races as part of a six-woman team. She quit both activities a few years ago due to shoulder injuries. She and her husband moved to Hilo, Hawaii in 2011, where they

received a record 51 inches of rain in August. “You can’t get to the water as easily here,” she bemoans, “it’s not like Oahu’s beaches.”

Pam has no plans to retire from gymnastics. She renewed her Level 10 rating this year and hopes to attend the 2019 NAWGJ Symposium in Fort Worth. She reflects, “I don’t know what my life would be like without gymnastics.”



*Pam Zak with her outrigger canoe paddling team – she’s second from the left.*

## ***PIONEERS IN JUDGING***

**A series of portraits leading up to the National Symposium:  
*New Frontiers: Steering Our Path Forward***

### **Jan and Patty: Bewitching Wisconsin for Over 45 Years**



Few coaches or judges in Wisconsin can remember a time when both Jan Adkins and Patty Brestrich weren't involved in the gymnastics scene. They joined forces in the mid-70's as judges for the newly formed NAWGJ, but both had been judging meets for years.

Jan Adkins was a YMCA gymnast in Des Plaines, Illinois and a gymnast on the first Northern Illinois University team before moving to Madison, Wisconsin as a newlywed in 1972. She had, though, gotten her judging feet wet back home. "At Northern, the coach told two of us to take pens and paper down to the local junior high school, and the coaches would tell us what to do when we got there," says Jan. "We really didn't know what we were doing!" In Wisconsin, coaching the Sun Prairie High School team was the priority, since she knew the DGWS (Division for Girls and Women's Sports) compulsories. Baby daughter Tricia came along to the practices.

Meanwhile, Patty Brestrich, a former gymnast in Sheboygan and a physical education major at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, was recruited into Dr. Mary McLellan's trial judging group, which was sent on assignments around the state. When Dr. McLellan helped found NAWGJ in 1974, she appointed Patty and LaCrosse college gymnast Linda Brannstrom as Wisconsin co-SJD's. This meant a trip to Boulder, Colorado to attend the first NAWGJ Symposium in 1976.

"The lectures were in a hotel, but we were driven to a school to see live gymnastics," Patty remembers. "And the banquet was held up in the mountains." Yvonne Hodge modeled the NAWGJ uniform there, wearing a white skirt, reversible royal blue/white vest and royal blue jacket. Another LaCrosse gymnast, Kathy Flaherty, had designed the NAWGJ jacket patch. "At first judges wore red, yellow or white shirts with their uniforms," Patty recalls. "That continued until we got a directive from Betty Sroufe that said the shirts had to be white." Pins collected at various meets were also popular—some judges fastened them all over their jacket lapels.

"One time when flying back from a meet," Patty says, "we had to transfer in Minneapolis. We were wearing our royal blue uniforms since we hadn't had time to change. People thought we were stewardesses and started asking us questions about what the weather was like in various parts of the country and other questions about the flights!"

She also remembers when Erna Wachtel came in for a college meet in LaCrosse that Dr. Mac was hosting. Many of the judges who volunteered were testing. "She told us to put our books under our pillow and sleep on them and we would pass. Unfortunately, it didn't always work."

Both Patty and Jan, as NAWGJ members (dues were \$15), continued to judge all kinds of meets—AAU, YMCA, club, high school and various University of Wisconsin colleges, including the Division I program at Madison. Soon, however, Patty and Linda Brannstrom found their shared SJD position overwhelming. Communication was by phone or mail, all contracts and newsletters had to be printed and mailed, and there were no funds to pay the expenses. They turned the position over to Sue Olson, who helped Dr. Mac run the fourth NAWGJ Symposium in LaCrosse in 1982.

Patty and Jan served on the Wisconsin State Governing Board for many years. Jan became SJD in 1985 and did not retire from the position until 2010. Because she and her husband Dave ran a printing/office supply store, she had access to copy machines and other equipment to help create a steady stream of judging aids, including the popular *All U Need* that was eventually sold in the NAWGJ Library. She also began a fall Judges' Invitational meet to raise money to pay her SJD office and travel expenses (the national SJD workshops began in 1989.) The meet has been a staple on the calendar ever since.

"Almost every Wisconsin judge participates one or two days," Jan says. "We come up with a different theme every year." (This year, it's *pirates*).

Patty, of course, is one of those faithful attendees, even though she doesn't like to wear costumes. "I like the comfortable themes," she jokes, "like sports." Patty continued to judge as much as she could during her career as a special education teacher at Grafton, Wisconsin middle school and high school. What was a temporary gig with North Shore Gymnastics in nearby Cedarburg also led to a steady coaching job. Even though she retired from teaching in 2013 after 39 years, she still loves going to the gym several days a week. Holding a lower level judge's rating the past several years has allowed her to keep a foothold in judging without the pressure of turning down too many assignments. "I'm a sucker for saying yes," she admits.

Meanwhile, Jan received her elite rating in 1989 and became a Brevet judge in the early 1990's. And not only did Jan contribute her administrative skills to NAWGJ, she founded the Wisconsin High School Judges' Association and became the Rules Interpreter in 1984, a position she still holds. She also served on the National Federation of High Schools National Rules Committee twice, just finishing a six-year term as chairperson. She received the NFHS Outstanding Service Award in 2011. Jan also received a Contributor of the Year award from Wisconsin USAG.

Whether dressed as witches or pirates—or judges—Jan and Patty have given Wisconsin gymnastics quiet leadership and participation since their college days, and the 40 Wisconsin judges driving the roads today have them to thank for paving the way.



Jan Adkins



Patty Brestrich

Next month: *Pam Zak: The Judge in the Boat*