

# A CELEBRATION OF SUCCESS

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## PRESENTATION TO CAL-BENKELEY MEN'S GYMNASTICS TEAM HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

(February 11, 2012)

By Bob Wuornos

*(Note to Readers:*

*I was invited to be a Guest Speaker at the banquet celebrating of the Hundredth Anniversary of Cal-Berkeley Men's Gymnastics Team. This honor was bestowed upon me because of our (Men's Intercollegiate Gymnastics Support Program) involvement in helping save the Cal-Berkeley Men's Gymnastics Team. We worked closely with Andrew Hampy and Cal-Gymnastics Forever to coordinate a national marketing and promotional effort to generate approximately \$3.5 Million in pledges to ensure the continuation of the Men's Gymnastics Team. The result: The Cal-Berkeley Men's Gymnastics Team has been re-instated and ensured continuation for at least eight more years. This will provide ample time for the program to retool and figure out a way to become a self-sustaining organization.)*

*The following is the essence of my presentation.*

*-Bob Wuornos*

### A. Celebration of Success

1. We are here to celebrate the success of the Cal-Berkeley Men's Gymnastics Team. We celebrate a long history of competitive success and we celebrate the recent history of successful re-instatement of the team. I am honored to be here with you and to celebrate along with you.
2. Through your collective efforts over the years, you have much to celebrate with many National Team and Individual Championships under your belt. I commend you for that.
3. Recently though, you have reason to celebrate another success, one that has national implications. Faced with extinction, you rallied and the nation rallied with you to generate sufficient funds via pledges to ensure the re-instatement of your team. This was a remarkable effort and one of which I am proud to be a participant. In that regard, I salute the efforts of guys like Andrew Hampy and the Cal Gymnastics Forever group that spearheaded this effort and all those people throughout the country who stepped up to the plate to donate to this worthy cause. It was a remarkable effort and it proved that we can save men's intercollegiate gymnastics teams if we so desire and we are willing to work together to do so.

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## B. Letter to the AD/Chancellor

1. In July, 2010, when word got out that Cal-Berkeley had decided to drop its Men's Gymnastics Team, I wrote a long letter to the Athletic Director (and copied the Chancellor) that outlined the need to maintain the team as well as many suggestions how to do it and how to make the program self-sustaining (for a copy of the letter, go to [www.migsp.org](http://www.migsp.org): Letter to Cal-Berkeley AD).
2. I also explained to her that we needed to figure out a way to expand collegiate gymnastic opportunities on the west coast and nationally and that Cal-Berkeley could provide a leadership role by providing a model for other institutions to follow. Cal-Berkeley should take a leadership role in bring men's gymnastics teams back as varsity sports at places like the Universities of Washington and Oregon, UCLA and Arizona State.
3. In that letter, I explained that I coached and went to graduate school at Michigan State University and that my allegiance was to Michigan State. In fact, I told her that I bled green, but if the Men's Team at Cal-Berkeley was re-instated, I would figure out a way to bleed Bear Blue. Well, it is getting close I and I think I must now figure out a way to bleed blue.

## C. Salute to Hal Frey & His Generation

1. I offer a salute to Dr. Hal (*sitting at a table directly in front of me*) and his generation for providing an opportunity for my generation to compete as gymnasts in college. The experience and leadership of his generation made it possible for all of us in this room to share in a dream and to do that which we loved to do.

## D. My Berkeley Connection

I have a connection to Cal-Berkeley that demonstrates the long lasting value and interconnected relationship we all have to men's college gymnastics.

In December of 1968, my coach brought me out to Berkeley for a gymnastics camp that Dr. Hal Frey directed. My Coach, Bill Holmes, was the high bar clinician and he used me as his demonstrator for a number of skills. He talked about dismounts and how to do a proper tap-swing. So, he had me demonstrate a tap-swing, a straddle jack-knife, a piked jack-knife and then a fly-away (of which I must admit was very, very good. Then he had me perform a double back and I did one that was incredibly high. I stuck my landing and I thought, "man,

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this is cool.” Then a guy in the audience stands up, tightens his grips, chinks up, jumps up on the high bar, does two giants, a tap swing and launches a piked double back a mile, high knives out at forty-five degrees and drops out of the sky. His name was Danny Millman...and I know you don't remember me, Dan, but I remember you. And I learned something from you that day that I have never forgotten. *(FYI, Dan was the 1968 World Champion on Trampoline.)*

*(At this point in the presentation, the audience cheered. I looked to a table on my right where Dan Millman was sitting. He looked up at me, pointed his index finger toward me, winked, and gave me a thumbs up.)*

Now, if you would have told me then, that a kid from a little college in the Midwest would be, in forty-four years, standing in front of a group of Cal-Berkeley gymnasts at their Hundredth Anniversary Banquet giving a presentation, I would not have believed you. But that is all part of the 'Life-Cycle of Sport'.

### E. Life Cycle of Sport

The Life-Cycle of Sport as I understand it is about a coach helping an athlete develop to his/her potential in a particular sport and for that athlete bring the knowledge base back into the sport and helping the next generation of athletes develop. In gymnastics

In gymnastics, it is my opinion that the collegiate gymnastics program provides a critical link in the Life-Cycle of Men's Gymnastics. We have people like Dr. Hal Frey who have benefitted from being college gymnasts and they have preserved and created gymnastics opportunities from which my generation has benefited. They have created unique opportunities for young gymnasts to experience a life as a student/athlete.

Many of you believe that being on the Cal-Berkeley Men's Gymnastics Team gave you an edge in developing your professional career. Well, that's what most of us who were competitive collegiate gymnasts in college at other institutions believe. We are better people for having had that experience.

It is my belief that we who have benefitted from this experience have an obligation to make sure the next generation has that same opportunity. We need to do what we can to ensure the next generations opportunity.

### F. The Men's Intercollegiate Gymnastics Support Program

1. The Mission of the MIGS Program is to preserve, protect, enhance & expand collegiate gymnastics opportunities for current and future generations of gymnasts.

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In 1969, there were two hundred-thirty-four varsity men's college gymnastics teams in the country. We had a National Championship at Division 1, Division 2, Division 3 and Junior college. We had gymnasts all over the country doing gymnastics and experiencing life on campus as a student athlete in the sport they loved. Like you, these young athletes benefited from their experience and coveted it just the way you did. To them, it was critical in their respective development as contributing members of society.

Today, those opportunities have been diminished. They have been diminished by College and University decision makers who have no experience in the sport and for all the wrong reasons.

I suggest to you that we must not let this continue to happen. We must stand up and fight for our cause and for our athletes...because if we don't, nobody else will.

For those of you who believe it can't be done, I would like to point out that we have in fact saved some programs from extinction. The alumni of the University of Michigan launched an effort to save its men's gymnastics team in 1999 and achieved success. The University of Minnesota was on the chopping block in 2001. Again, a group of alumni worked together successfully re-instate the team. In 2011, the men's team at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was threatened. Again, an effort was launched by the alumni and the program retained.

The most significant effort though, was that of Cal Gymnastics Forever. This group launched a major campaign to generate \$3.5 Million in pledge funds to save the Cal-Berkeley Men's Gymnastics Team.

The MIGS Program is please to have played a role in these efforts (sans Michigan). We have worked with and assisted in engaging a national audience and generated financial support for these programs.

The point of all this: It can be done. It has been done.

The success of keeping each of these teams as a viable entity is an important piece of solving the national puzzle.

2. Furthermore, we know that we can add men's team programs to the national landscape because of the activity at the State University of New York at Brockport. We have been working and providing financial support to a newly formed team there to help them get established. Since they established a club team four years ago, they have grown rapidly to become a viable entity in the Northeast and they compete a Division 1 Schedule.

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## 3. Nissen-Emery Sponsorship

One of the things the MIGS Program does is to help sponsor the Nissen-Emery Award for the College Gymnast of the Year. We are a proud sponsor of this award, an award that some of the Cal-Berkeley Gymnasts may have been a recipient.

## G. Expansion Goals

### 1. One Program per State

Our goal is to ensure that there is one College Varsity Men's Gymnastics Team in every state. And where demographics suggest it is appropriate, more. Demographics suggest a need for multiple team programs in state like California, Texas, New York, etc.

### 2. Big Ten

i. Michigan State

### 3. Pac 10

i. ASU

ii. Washington

iii. Southern California (UCLA)

### 4. Northeast

### 5. Southeast

### 6. South

## H. Role of Social Media Marketing

1. Networking without spending a nickel on postage

## I. What you can do

J. Presentation to Andrew Hampy (\$2,500 to Gymnastics Fund)

K. Presentation to Hal Frey (College Gymnastics Forever t-Shirt)