



## MARY LOU RETTON: BIOGRAPHY

Mary Lou Retton catapulted to international fame by winning the All-Around Olympic Gold Medal in women's gymnastics at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, becoming the first American woman ever to win a gold medal in gymnastics. She also won silver medals for Team and Vault, and bronze medals for Uneven Bars and Floor Exercise. Her five medals were the most won by any athlete at the '84 Olympics.

In addition to this, other gymnastics victories achieved by Mary Lou include being the only woman to win three American Cups (1983-85), the only American to win Japan's prestigious Chunichi Cup (1983), two U.S. Gymnastics Federation American Classics (1983, 84), and the All-Around title at both the 1984 National Championships and Olympic Trials. Mary Lou retired from competitive gymnastics in 1986.

But after 20 years into retirement, Mary Lou is still winning awards for her gymnastics legacy. In 1994, the U.S. Olympic Committee established the Mary Lou Retton Award, granted for athletic excellence. She was also honored with the Flo Hyman Award in 1995, the annual award given between 1987 and 2004 to a female sportsperson who excels in athletic performance and charitable activism. And in 2000, Mary Lou was inducted into the World Sports Hall of Fame, an organization that annually recognizes world-class individuals with athletic ability, who act as role models in their community and have a strong record of humanitarian efforts.

Today, she continues to touch the lives of millions. A national sports survey found Mary Lou to be the most popular athlete in America. She is in great demand as a motivational speaker and corporate spokesperson and also travels the world as a "Fitness Ambassador" promoting the benefits of proper nutrition and regular exercise. Mary Lou serves as national chairperson and sits on the Board of Governors of the Children's Miracle Network. She was a commentator for NBC at the '88 Olympic Games and wrote a daily column for USA Today at the '92 and '96 Olympics. At the '96 Olympics in Atlanta, Mary Lou also served as an on air reporter for Gannett Broadcasting's NBC affiliates, the largest NBC affiliate group in the United States. In addition, she co-hosted the weekly television series *Road to Olympic Gold*.

Mary Lou has appeared in the motion pictures *Scrooged* and *Naked Gun 33 1/3*. She has made appearances on numerous television shows including *Guiding Light*, *Knots Landing*, and *Dream On*, and guest starred in one of the highest rated episodes of the series *Baywatch*.