

## Joyce Wilbon

Joyce grew up in Patterson, N. J. Her interest in gymnastics sparked after watching the 1976 Olympics. She started her career at Arel Gymnastics in Allendale, New Jersey. She competed in the eight and under age group at that time USA-G used class not Levels, she competed as a class III her first year. She was not able to do the layout squat vault because of her size. The following year she was the fault champion. During her time at Arel she worked on her optional skills with Raymond Devenney. After Arel closed, she moved to North Stars under Paul Bohrer. It is there her career took off. I remember the first tsuk she threw in a meet I was judging vault, Paul Bohrer was spotting her, everyone stopped to watch, I got so excited I clapped! Boy did I get a talking to from Paul! Tony took over as Joyce's coach, She became his first elite athlete as well as the first Afro American elite gymnast in New Jersey.

Joyce was known for her explosive power. In 1985 she scored a perfect 10 at the Olympic Fest on vault and on floor. In 1986 she was the number one vaulter at the championships as well as taking third all around. She won bronze all around in the Moscow News and gained the title of Miss Leningrad. At the Goodwill games in 1986 she became the first us gymnast to metal. She was awarded four metals at the Pacific Alliance in China, She went on in 1988 Olympic trials where she broke her foot ending her gymnastics career.

Today, Joyce lives in North Carolina working as a home health aide for hospice, she is a mom of four children Tyshan, Rahniece, Quamier, and Tahjmir. Currently Quamier is attending Wingate University in North Carolina on an academic scholarship and playing football. Her youngest son I Tahjmir is also an outstanding football player. Apparently they both got their power and speed from mom.

Behind every successful athlete is always a supportive loving parent's. In Joyce's case her mom Ida sacrificed most of her needs for Joyce. I remember when Joyce first learned the floor compulsory at age 7. Practice at that time was about three times a week yet she had those routines down instantly I later found out it was Ida who learned them observing practice and then went home and drilled them. As Joyce's level availability increased so did Ida's. She later went on to coach at Elite Gymnastics in Hawthorne New Jersey where she has had many gymnasts love her and still do!