

## Where Are They Now? An Update on Husky Alum Ron Hunter

by Ron Hunter and Coach Hughes

1968: A year noteworthy for the debut of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood on PBS, the assassination of both Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy... and I had just graduated from high school and was off to do gymnastics at the University of Washington.

Living only three hours from Seattle, I had a long familiarity with coach Hughes and the UW gym program as I had attended and competed in the Northwest meets as well as attending the Highline summer gym camp. I had just won the Canadian Junior championships in the summer of 1967 and was really excited to be offered a gymnastics scholarship. I was going to be on the same team as Yoshi, Sho, and Hide, who had been my heroes.

Right after my graduation from high school, I moved to Seattle and worked the summer before starting school as a gardener at the UW so I could start training. I also had the good fortune to move in with one of the assistant coaches Mike Flansaa and his wife Dale, and so spent my freshman year living with them.

Our freshman (red shirt) team also had a talented gymnast from Japan, Tomi Ozora, who although not reaching the level of Yoshi, Sho, and Hide etc. was a gifted gymnast and a valuable addition to our squad. One of my training memories of our other assistant coach Eigil Flaathen was the time he said I would never be better on pommel horse as my butt was too large. Not sure if he was right but to be on the safe side I kept my routine conservative (no behind-the-back moves). I was an all-around competitor, but my best event was rings and in my freshman year I got to be the varsity team alternate to the Pac 8 conference championships in Los Angeles (UCLA, I think). Hugely exciting.

I lettered each year but my best performance was in my senior year. I earned a bronze medal on parallel bars at the conference championships, behind Steve Hug from Stanford and Tomi Ozora from our team. That year our team also won the conference and went to the NCAA Nationals at Iowa State. I was team captain that year, and as it was 1972 with "Flower Power" in full bloom, our team had a variety of hairstyles – some involving ponytails. Coach Hughes lost many nights' sleep worrying about how we would look and be regarded compared to "clean cut" Midwestern teams at the Nationals. I can't remember how we placed, but notwithstanding our less-than-conservative appearance we

presented ourselves well.

*Note from Coach Hughes: In addition to the team going to the Nationals, Ron himself qualified for the NCAAs as an all-around competitor, and at the end of the season he was elected the Outstanding Gymnast for the Huskies.*



Back in competition days

Outside of the gym in my junior year I rented an apartment with Lars Kolsrud, a gymnast from Norway. He and I had formed a friendship in my sophomore year and he has remained my close friend ever since.

Lars was only at UW for two years, but in 1973 after I had returned to Canada and he to Norway, we reunited in Moscow at the World Student Games where we were each representing our respective countries. It was a complete surprise to each of us that the other was there but once we met I spent most of my free time with the Norwegian team.

I studied Mechanical Engineering at UW but decided that I would like to try the

law, so after graduation with my B.S. in

Mechanical Engineering I was accepted into the University of British Columbia Law School and returned to Canada. I graduated in 1975 and moved to a smaller city in the interior of BC just as Bo Bennett, a former Husky, was leaving that community. I finally settled in Victoria, BC (the capital of our province), married, and raised my family. I have two sons who are finished with school and out in the world. I practiced law in Victoria and was one of the founders of a medium-sized law firm which continues today.

I didn't continue with gymnastics after university but have remained an avid skier, bicycle tourist, runner, and hiker.

In 2010 I retired from Law, and together with my wife Helga and our two German Short-hair Pointer dogs, left Victoria and moved to a semi-rural community on the ocean approximately



Ron and his wife, Helga

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70 miles north of the city of Vancouver. Here we are building a home, hiking, skiing, boating, and enjoying our life.

I have nothing but wonderful memories of the UW and all the team members and coaches. There were others in the gym who were also mentors... most notably Kanati Allan (a former UCLA gymnast), Bob Hall, and Gunter Bohrmann (both former Washington gymnasts).



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