



# MARY LOU RETTON

## America's Most Popular Athlete

### PERSONAL DATA

- BIRTHDATE:** January 24, 1968
- BIRTHPLACE:** Fairmont, West Virginia
- FAMILY INFO:** The youngest of 5 children ( 3 boys, 2 girls)  
born to Lois and Ronnie Retton. Married  
Shannon Kelley December 29, 1990. Daughters  
Shayla Rae, born April 12, 1995, McKenna Lane  
Born, April 12, 1997 and Skyla Brae born,  
August 9, 2000, Emma Jean, born June 20, 2003
- RESIDENCE:** Houston, Texas

Mary Lou Retton catapulted to international fame by winning the All-Around 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. To this day she remains the only American ever to win the Olympic All-Around Title.

Other victories 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.

Today, she continues to touch the lives of millions. A national sports survey found Mary Lou to **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*

A budding actress, 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*.

Countless awards and honors have been bestowed on Mary Lou including 1984 *Sports Illustrated* Sportswoman of the Year; 1984 Associated Press Amateur Athlete of the Year; the first gymnast and youngest inductee into the USOC Olympic Hall of Fame; the first woman to appear on the Wheaties box; and one of America's Top Ten "Most Admired" public figures. In 1994 the U.S. Olympic Committee established the annual Mary Lou Retton Award for athletic excellence. In 1995, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton presented Mary Lou with The Flo Hyman Award in recognition of her spirit, dignity and commitment to excellence. Mary Lou was selected a member of the official White House delegation representing the President at both the 1992 and 1998 Olympic Games.

### HONORS:

1984 Sports Illustrated Sportswoman of the Year  
1984 Associated Press Female Amateur Athlete of the Year  
1984 Women's Sports Foundation Athlete of the Year  
1984 American Academy of Achievement Award  
1985 USOC Olympic Hall of Fame (youngest inductee)  
1985 World Almanac "25 Most Influential Women"  
1986 NCC Citizen of the Year  
1990 Top Ten "Most Admired" Public Figures

1992 Italian-American Sports Hall of Fame (youngest inductee)  
1992 Special Advisor, President's Council on Physical Fitness  
1992 Official White House Delegate, Summer Olympics  
1993 AP National Survey "Most Popular Athlete in America"  
1994 'Mary Lou Retton Award' created by US Olympic Comm.  
1994 Fitness Magazine's "25 Fittest People in the World"  
1995 Flo Hyman Award  
1998 Official White House Delegate, Winter Olympics  
2000 Humanitarian Hall of Fame Recipient  
2003 Ellis Island Medal of Honor