

Tawni Jones Ahlstrom

Mesa City Sports

Hall of Fame

2018



By Jason P. Skoda

It seems easy to make a correlation between gymnastics and diving.

There has to be incredible body control, seeing the world as it spins past in the midst of tumbling or flipping and scoring all comes down to nailing the landing.

With one major difference.

“When I was younger, I competed in gymnastics so when I started swimming and diving my Mom said I should try diving because I did gymnastics for so long,” Tawni Jones Ahlstrom said. “There are similarities, but it is also very different at the same time.

“In gymnastics you’re told to never land on your head and in diving you always want to go head first.”

It became clear early on in Jones Ahlstrom’s career at Mountain View that she had a knack for landing just about perfectly on her head off the diving platform.

Jones Ahlstrom was a two-time state champion for the Toros as she won it her sophomore and senior years. As a freshman she finished as state runner-up, missing a title by four points, and she missed the state meet because of an ankle injury her junior when she was a heavy favorite to repeat.

In other words, Jones Ahlstrom was very close to being a four-time big-school champion, but she looks at the experience as just the same and so do others as she will be one of the eight 2018 inductees in the Mesa City Hall of Fame on Nov. 19 at Red Mountain High.

“I am really happy with how my high school career went,” she said. “Honestly, it was just a stepping stone in my career and I have nothing but great memories.”

A lot those memories were jogged in the weeks leading up to the Hall of Fame ceremony as Jones Ahlstrom, who was also a member of the Toros’ state winning cheerleading team, helped prepare her bio for the event.

“The (news of induction) came out of the blue,” she said. “It never crossed my mind. Getting ready for it has taken me down memory lane while I’ve been looking for pictures and video. It’s like going back into time to a great period in my life.”

Jones Ahlstrom, who started at age 10 at Mesa Desert Divers before moving to CDS in Scottsdale, headed to BYU after graduating and has a successful career while competing for the Cougars. She was a

two-time All-American and became the first Cougar to sweep the one-meter and three-meter diving events at the Mountain West Conference meet. She finished 13th in the country her senior year with a total of 307.35.

After BYU she headed to USC to continue working while contemplating a run at the Olympic Trials but injuries and the desire to finish her degree led her back to BYU before going on a church mission in Missouri for two years.

“I trained over the summer and gave it some thought, but decided I needed a break,” she said. “Swimming was a tremendous experience in my life. I gave myself fully to something and was so passionate to work hard toward something. I was able to achieve so much, and I feel like I had so many great experiences that shaped who I was at the time.”

Jones Ahlstrom, who is married to Scott and has two children (Owen, 4, and Olive, 2), recalls the culture in the Mountain View program as one that pushed everyone to excel.

“There was always this culture of excellence and it was a great environment to be a part of,” she said. “I also cheered, and it was a part of my experience, too. I was so thankful to the coaches for being so flexible to with my schedule for club and still compete for my school. I’m grateful for everything about my time at Mountain View.”