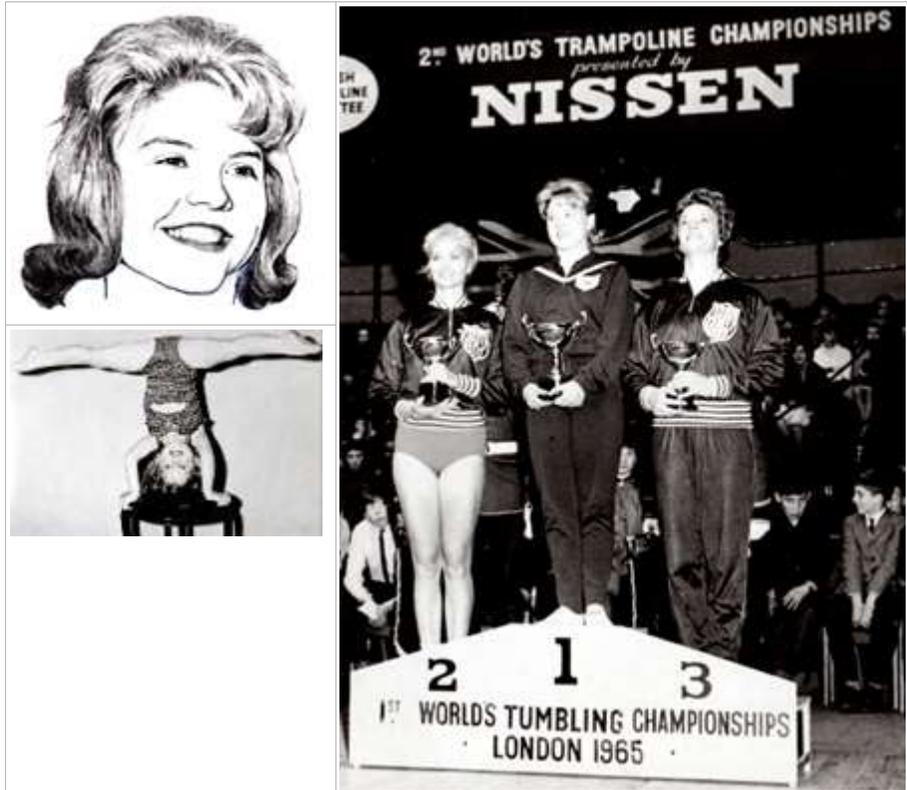


# WAS - Trampoline & Tumbling Legend

## Judy Wills Cline

2000 Honoree



### Ten-Time World Champion

*Judy Wills Cline is one of the most phenomenal athletes in the history of trampolining and tumbling. In addition to winning ten world crowns, she was many times an American and collegiate champion winning ten national AAU titles and three national USGF titles. She competed at a precarious time for athletes who risked sanction by the AAU for participation in USGF events. She was declared ineligible for the 1965 AAU Nationals since she had competed in, and won, USGF titles in trampoline and tumbling earlier that year. She was never defeated in tumbling after age seven. Her earliest competition came at age five when she won a silver medal in tumbling at the Southern AAU competitions in Louisiana.*

Wills Cline came into prominence in 1960 when she toured with the reigning world championship team from the Soviet Union. One of the Soviet's nine gold medalists was Polina Ashtakova, later the coach of the Soviet women who were never defeated as a team in Olympic competition. Young Judy accepted an invitation to train with the Soviets in Moscow where extensive footage of her performances were recorded on film. Ashtakova was fascinated with little Judy who, according to her, had no peer in the Soviet Union. Tumbling outside of the circus in those days was strictly an American competitive event. Similarly, the trampoline was in its infancy. Four years later (1964) Wills Cline won the first of five consecutive World Championship titles on the trampoline, a record that has yet to be duplicated. Her teammate at Southern Illinois University, Nancy Smith, was runner up in three of these. Dennis Horne, an English coach who watched an array of women go down to defeat in the early World Championships wrote of Judy, "When her reign does finally end, we may have witnessed a performer whose undefeated record may stand for all time." The following is one of Wills Cline's Championship trampoline routines Half in, half out fliffus; back double full; Rudolph; back full; back double full; back tuck; half out fliffus; back double full.

Wills Cline could twist with equal facility left and right and mastered the triple full twisting back salto rarely seen during her competitive years and has never been performed since in both directions by one performer. She holds the consecutive whip back record at twenty-six and has performed eight bounding double fulls! Wills Cline was a member of Herb Vogel's collegiate championship team at Southern Illinois University and was never beaten in the tumbling and trampoline events. Vogel wrote of his young star, "... she has become a legend in her own time, none will be able to match her skill ... when we sing 'Go Southern Go,' it's Wills that gives the words meaning." Wills Cline also served as SIU's "Saluki" mascot. In 1968, when SIU met the famed Duke basketball team in Madison Square Garden, Judy literally tumbled circles around the bewildered "Blue Devil" mascot. She appeared on Ed Sullivan's "Toast of the Town" at age six and worked professionally as an acrobat in Gulfport's (MI) Marineland and the Atlantic City Steel Pier. Later, she became a coach, club owner and clinician following her competitive years putting her degree in theater work to use and has been a national trampoline coach for USA Gymnastics. Her son Mike was an accomplished vaulter for the Air Force Academy. A second son, Paul, served as manager for the Academy's team.

YOB: 1948

World Titles:

- Trampoline, 1964-1968
- Synchronized Trampoline (with Nancy Smith), 1966 & 1967
- Tumbling, 1964 & 1965
- Spaceball (with Ron Munn)

National Titles:

- AAU (Trampoline & Tumbling): 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967 & 1968
- USGF / USAG: 1965 (Trampoline & Tumbling) & 1966 (Trampoline)



Judy Wills with (L to R) Yuri Titov, Polina Ashtakova and George Nissen (The Soviet team toured the US in 1960).



Wills with friend and teammate Nancy Smith.

1967 World Championships  
1968 World Championships

References:

- *Guinness World Records* accounts for nine of ten records for women and four better than the men's record holder, Aleksandr Moskalenko of Russia.
- Dennis Horne, *Trampolining: A Complete Handbook*. London, GBR, Faber and Faber, 1968.