

WAS - Gymnastics Legend

Vincent "Vinnie" D'Autorio

2008 Inductee



The Oldest Olympian to Compete for the USA

Vincent D'Autorio was born on October 1, 1915 in Newark, New Jersey. He was the oldest of ten children in his family. He took up gymnastics in high school at Central HS and later at Eastside HS. He won the Newark City High School gymnastics Championship his junior year. He was not able to go to college due to family financial constraints. Instead, D'Autorio became an apprentice jeweler and spent twenty-five years in the jewelry business.

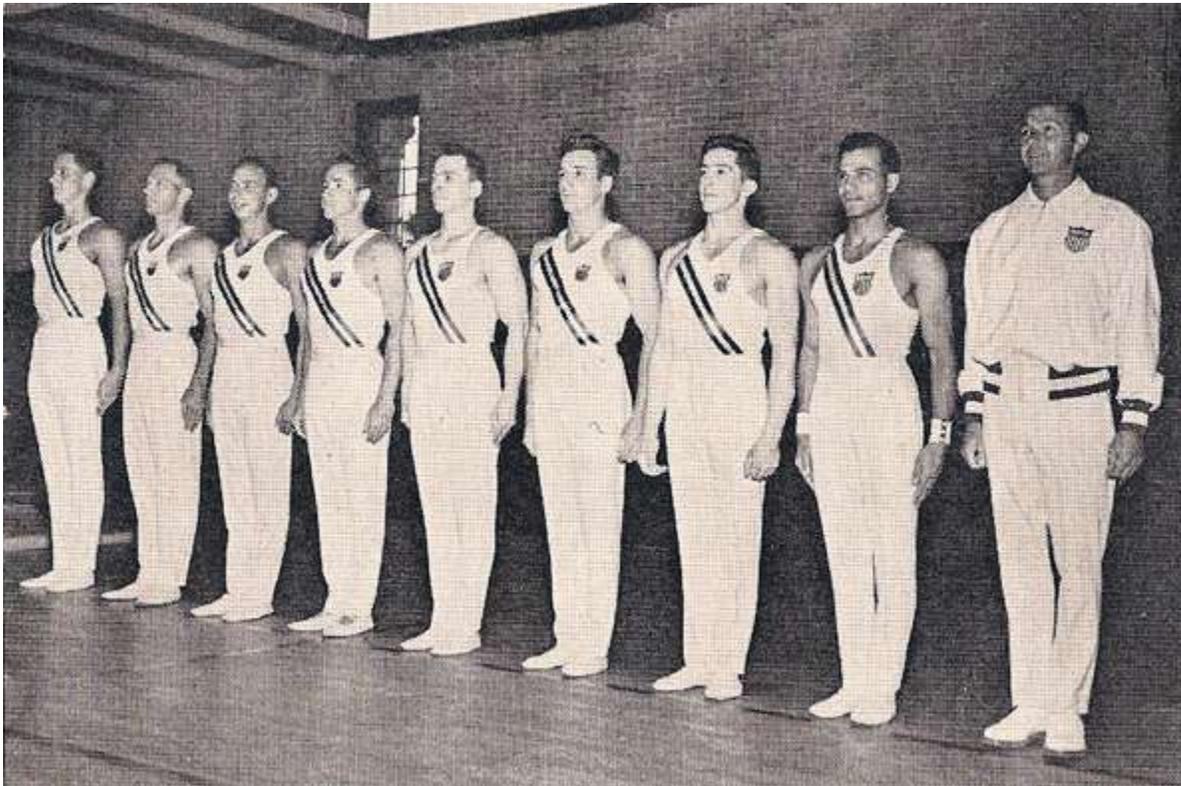
D'Autorio was a prime candidate for the 1940 Olympic team. The Olympic Games were canceled due to the War and Vince joined the Army (1942-1945) and served in Naval Construction Battalion "Sea Bees" in the South Pacific Islands. During his military service, he could often be found working out in his spare time on a trampoline made of rubber strands cut from inner tubes and a set of parallel bars made of pipes. The 1944 Olympic Games were also canceled due to the War. D'Autorio did compete in some National Amateur Athletic Union meets while in the service.

D'Autorio was a member of the Swiss Turnverin in New Jersey. The Turnverin was a "Mecca" for many of America's great gymnasts of the forties and fifties. D'Autorio could often be found working out with his teammate and friend Frank Cumiskey. Cumiskey was also one of America's great gymnasts and renowned judges. At six feet one inch, it was often Vinnie's job to spot his tall teammate on the horizontal bar with Frank's feet brushing the ground on each giant swing.



Vinnie training on board of the ship to London's 1948 Olympic Games.

D'Autorio made the 1948 US Olympic team and was the second highest American scorer in London. At age thirty-six, D'Autorio made the 1952 US Olympic team to Helsinki, Finland. His age record still stands at this time. Additionally, the National Collegiate Gymnastic Alumni Association honored D'Autorio by naming him to the 1944 Honorary Olympic team.



The 1952 US Olympic team: Jack Beckner, LCDR. Walter Plattman, William Roetzheim, Charley Sims, Edward Scrobe,
Donald Holder, Robert Stout, Vincent D'Autorio and Coach Tom Maloney.

D'Autorio was an extraordinary accomplished teacher and coach. He taught gymnastics classes for Bonnie Prudden in White Plains, New York. Bonnie was one of the early pioneers of physical fitness programs in the United States. When Prudden closed her school, D'Autorio opened his own gymnastics school in Westchester County, NY. He

helped establish gymnastics programs in twelve Westchester area high schools and helped organize a Westchester County Gymnastics championship program. D'Autorio also coached at Panzer College.



Vinnie's forte: the "teaching mode".

D'Autorio served as the assistant program director at the National Gymnastic Clinic (NGC) of Sarasota, Florida. The National Gymnastic Clinic was attended by most of the accomplished gymnasts and coaches during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. D'Autorio's affiliation with NGC led him to becoming a resident of Florida and Sarasota. He invested in properties on Long Boat Key in Sarasota. Further investment opportunities by Vince were in commercial real estate in South Carolina as well as Florida. D'Autorio also invested in the Shell's restaurant chain which was established in Florida in 1986.

Ironically, D'Autorio never won a NAAU Championship. Competing in the Metropolitan Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) in 1942, D'Autorio placed second in the all-around and pommel horse and placed third on parallel bars. In the 1942 National AAU, he placed third on the pommel horse. In the 1943 NAAU, D'Autorio was second on pommel horse and third on floor exercise. After wartime service, he placed second in the all-around and pommel horse and was third on floor exercise, parallel bars and horizontal bar in 1946 Metropolitan AAU meet. At the 1947 NAAU, D'Autorio was fourth in the all-around, pommel horse and horizontal bar. In the 1948 Metropolitan AAU, he won floor exercise and pommel horse and placed second in the all-around, parallel bars and horizontal bar. In the 1950 NAAU, D'Autorio was fourth in the all-around and fifth on pommel horse. In the 1951 NAAU, D'Autorio was fourth on pommel horse

and sixth on horizontal bar. In the 1952 NAAU, D'Autorio fifth on pommel horse, sixth on horizontal bar and eighth in the all-around. In the 1954 Metropolitan AAU, he won the all-around and the pommel horse. D'Autorio had competed on the national level from 1942 until 1954.

Vincent D'Autorio passed away at age 92 from acute Leukemia September 10th, one week before his official induction as "Legend" in the World Acrobatic Society. D'Autorio's brother Joseph and his sister Nancy accepted his medallion at the 2008 WAS Congress.

1915-2008



Our Legend in his Study.