

Doris Barrilleaux And the Beginnings of Modern Women's Bodybuilding

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With the world fully aware of the importance of physical fitness and so many women now participating in sports which until recently were not open to them, women's bodybuilding may readily change the role of women in society. Although there will always be those who wish to remain delicate, helpless, clinging vines I believe there will be those who wish to be considered strong, healthy, independent and able to stand on their own two feet. The day that a movie or television program is made in which the woman does not fall and need to be rescued from the danger, we will know that we have arrived. ~ Doris Barrilleaux, 1982

On 17 June 1978, Doris Barrilleaux, a forty-six-year-old grandmother and mother of five, walked onto the stage of the Canton YMCA auditorium dressed in a zebra-striped bikini. Although she was, by her own admission, “so scared she was shaking,” Barrilleaux allowed the public to view her body that day because she knew—just as every other woman on the stage knew—that they were making history.¹ Doris, and the thirteen other women who entered what meet promoter Henry McGhee called the “National Women’s Physique Championships,” were competing in what is generally regarded as the first national women’s bodybuilding contest held in the modern era.² Although only three of the women were from outside Ohio and the contest itself was described by Barrilleaux as “total chaos,” the meet had a profound effect on the Riverview, Florida, flight attendant. “It made me want to do things better,” recalled Barrilleaux. “I left Canton excited, and I sometimes wonder if I’d have ever had the gumption to begin running my own meets in Florida if I hadn’t entered Henry’s meet.”³

As will be shown, in the years following her bodybuilding debut, Barrilleaux did much more than just “run meets” in Florida. In fact, she played a pivotal role in the development of the sport for women as she formed an association for women’s bodybuilding, began a women’s newsletter, and was one of the most vocal and important early advocates for the sport. Her efforts greatly contributed to the explosion of interest

in women’s bodybuilding that emerged at the end of the 1970s and directly contributed to the acceptance found by women’s bodybuilding in the 1980s.⁴ Barrilleaux engaged at all levels of the sport—she was a competitor, an organizer, a promoter, a publisher, an author, an administrator, a judge, a photographer, and one of the philosophical leaders of this new activity. As Barrilleaux’s involvement with women’s bodybuilding increased, however, she found herself locked in a struggle for control of the sport. Although Doris championed the right of women to create and govern their own sport and argued that the best aesthetic for women’s bodybuilding was one that emphasized the natural femininity of women, she was eventually marginalized within the very sport she helped create. Although ultimately unable to maintain either political or aesthetic control, Barrilleaux nonetheless had a singular effect on the creation of women’s bodybuilding, and without her tireless efforts it is difficult to imagine that women’s bodybuilding would have emerged as such a powerful cultural force in the 1980s.⁵

Doris Biering Barrilleaux Discovers Bodybuilding

Barrilleaux was born Doris Jean Biering in 1931 in Houston, Texas. Because she grew to womanhood before Title IX became law in 1973, Barrilleaux did not play any varsity sports but she did love to bowl and liked playing basketball in gym class, although she claims to have been bothered by the half-court and the three-drib-

ble rules for girls.⁶ As a high school student, Barrilleaux never gave a thought to bodybuilding but she admits to being drawn to the bodies of celebrity swimmer and film star Esther Williams, dancer Cyd Charisse, and Olympic swimmer Johnny Weissmuller, who played Tarzan in the movies.⁷ The other body she was drawn to in high school was that of handsome Sterling Barrilleaux, three years her senior. Barrilleaux was just sixteen when she married Sterling, a nineteen-year-old employee at the American Can Company, and she bore her first child, a daughter they named Vickie Lynn, at about the age that most girls were thinking of their senior prom.⁸ By the time she was twenty-five, Barrilleaux had had three more children and the family was living in Grand Prairie, Texas. Three weeks after the birth of Jerry, her fourth child, in December of 1955, Barrilleaux was playing with her children at a neighborhood playground when she attempted to hang by her knees from the jungle gym bars. “I couldn’t believe,” she later reported, “that I was so weak that I couldn’t pull my legs up to the bar.”⁹ Barrilleaux’s inability to perform what had once been a simple maneuver caused her to begin thinking about her personal fitness and she resolved to gain control of her body through a program of diet and exercise.¹⁰ Unsure where to turn for advice, Doris went to a newsstand and looked for magazines on exercise. She didn’t find any published specifically for women but there were some men’s weight training magazines in the racks and she bought several copies. One of the magazines she purchased was Bob Hoffman’s *Strength & Health*. Although most of the articles were not aimed at women, Doris saw no reason not to do the same exercises and so she created a routine for herself that she did at home with relatively little equipment. As she grew stronger and fitter, however, Barrilleaux made the decision to train in a regular gym so that she could have access to free weights and other equipment.¹¹ However, in the 1950s, deciding to train in a gym was not a simple matter for women; most health clubs were for men only. After making a number of phone calls, however, Doris finally found a club that would let her train. Doris recalls, “I drove around the block several



Doris Barrilleaux sent this photo of herself to Vera Christensen in 1962 for use in *Strength & Health* magazine. Although Barrilleaux had a figure that many women would envy, Christensen rejected it as “too masculine.”

Photo courtesy Doris Barrilleaux

times on that first day, and I even stopped and used a pay phone to make sure it was really okay for me to go in. I guess I wanted reassurance.”¹² Once inside, the gym owner’s wife met Doris and explained that there was a separate area where she could train and not be disruptive to the men. So, in 1955, in a segregated weight training area hidden behind a wooden partition, Barrilleaux began her first gym workouts. For the next four months Doris faithfully went to the gym three times a week and soon noticed that she felt much stronger and healthier. Her routine lasted one to two hours and included abdominal curls, calf-raises, bench presses, flies, rowing motions, overhead presses, deadlifts, and squats. By modern standards the weights she used were very light—ranging from five to twenty pounds. When she discovered that she was pregnant again, Barrilleaux continued training right up to the day before she gave birth to her fifth child, Don, in 1958, and even went bowling the night before she delivered. This, her last pregnancy, was by far the easiest, according to Barrilleaux, and she attributes her easy labor and quick recovery to her weight-training program.¹³

In 1959, Sterling was transferred to the American Can Company plant in Tampa, Florida, and the Barrilleaux family moved to the small town of Brandon, just outside the city. Brandon was primarily an agricultural center at that time and to Doris’ regret there was no gym she could join in the area. So, with Sterling’s blessing she purchased weights and a bench and continued her exercise routine at home. While in Brandon, Barrilleaux began to document her physique improvement through a series of self-portrait photographs. At the same time, she began to correspond with fellow Floridian Vera Christensen, author of “To the Ladies,” a monthly women’s column in *Strength & Health* magazine that Christensen had begun in 1956.¹⁴

A pivotal moment in Barrilleaux’s intellectual understanding occurred in 1962 when she sent a photograph to *Strength & Health* showing herself doing a double-biceps pose. To her surprise, the photo was returned by Christensen with a note suggesting the pose was “too

masculine,” although Christensen then added, “Please send another.”¹⁵ Barrilleaux was surprised by the note as she regarded herself as strong and toned at that point in her life and did not think her body looked masculine. So, she submitted a more conventional photo of herself, seated on a beach in a bikini. That photo appeared in the February 1963 issue of *Strength & Health* as an illustration for Christensen’s article, “Family Fitness.” Barrilleaux, then 32-years old, was extolled in the piece as a fitness role model other housewives should work to emulate.¹⁶ In thinking back over her career, Barrilleaux credits that note from Christensen as the moment when she first began thinking about the gender politics of weight training, muscularity, and femininity.¹⁷

In 1963, Sterling was asked to transfer again and this time the family moved to a suburb of New Orleans. Once settled, she and Sterling, who was also weight training by this time, became members at the Imperial Health Club in Gretna, Louisiana.¹⁸ Although men and women didn’t train together at the Imperial Health Club, Barrilleaux found the men to be “welcoming enough” and sometimes even “supportive.”¹⁹ The gym’s owner was certainly impressed with Doris; he asked her to manage his gym and sell memberships but she didn’t think she had the time given her large family. However, she did do some part-time work for the club as a weight-training instructor, and she and Sterling—who had also developed a fine physique by this time—were pictured in newspaper advertisements for the club.²⁰ That same year, Doris recalls attending several men’s bodybuilding contests in New Orleans. “In those days, the AAU always held the bodybuilding contests after weightlifting meets and I clearly remember how bored we’d get waiting for the bodybuilders to get their turn. Still, I loved it and found it real interesting.”²¹

In 1967, Doris became a grandmother and also began a new career as a flight attendant and part-time office manager for a private travel club in New Orleans. She was just thirty-six. Doris, who’d gone straight from girlhood to motherhood, found the travel and

the wealthy clients she met through her new job fascinating. She fell in love with travel and when Sterling was promoted at American Can Company and sent back to Tampa, she continued to dream about finding another job as a flight attendant. However, those plans went on hold when Sterling decided after less than a year in Tampa that if he stayed with American Can he and his family would be facing several more moves. Consequently he resigned in late 1970 and opened his own automotive mechanics shop near Riverview, Florida. To help ends meet, Doris took a job at a local pharmacy where she helped fill prescriptions three days a week and did Sterling’s book-keeping on her days off.²² The business proved to be a success and Doris and Sterling purchased two lots at the mouth of the Alafia River where they built their new home. Beautifully situated, with a dock for easy river access, they could watch the sun set over the Gulf of Mexico and see manatees swim past to feed on the nearby mangrove trees.²³

Tampa had several serious gyms in the early 1970s and Doris took out a membership at Hector’s Health Club where she was soon connecting with the Florida bodybuilding community. She attended most of the men’s contests in her area, often accompanied by her friend, Joyce Weir, and the two attractive women were often asked to hand out the trophies to the male winners.²⁴ During this time, Doris also met the talented physique photographer, Dick Falcon, who lived in Tampa.²⁵ Doris, who had not yet had any major media coverage, approached Falcon about doing a story on her for one of the muscle magazines. Falcon was not only willing to do the piece, he told Barrilleaux that he would “make her famous.”²⁶ Shortly thereafter, he set up a photo shoot with Doris and began submitting photos of her to the various magazines he normally supplied. Shots of her demonstrating resistance-training exercises appeared in “Women, Too, Need Exercise,” in *Muscular Development* in January 1977; and then in the March 1977 issue of *Strength and Health*, Falcon’s profile of Barrilleaux appeared entitled, “Keeping Youthful at Forty-Six.”²⁷ More Falcon



Because of Doris’ interest in health and exercise, Sterling Barrilleaux also began training regularly and built a fine physique. He and Doris were asked to pose in gym ads for the Imperial Health Club in Gretna, Louisiana.

photos appeared in the August 1977 issue of *Muscular Development* alongside Bob Hoffman's article, "Fresh Air and Sunshine."²⁸ The following year Falcon also photographed Barrilleaux for her 1978 book, *Inside Weight Training for Women*, which she co-authored with Jim Murray.²⁹

It was through her friendship with Dick Falcon that Doris began learning about photography and writing articles for fitness magazines. Like Falcon, Barrilleaux had a good eye for physique photography and was soon recognized as one of the major physique photographers of the 1980s and 1990s. By her own count, her photographs have appeared on 189 magazine covers over the past several decades and she's had several thousand images published in magazines such as *Strength & Health*, *Muscular Development*, *Muscle Training Illustrated*, *Body Talk*, and *Florida Muscle News*.³⁰

Before Modern Women's Bodybuilding

We use the term "modern women's bodybuilding" in this article to differentiate between the sanctioned sport that emerged after 1978 and the earlier precursors of women's bodybuilding.³¹ The pre-modern or archaic era of women's physique contests in America began in 1903 when Bernarr Macfadden held a women's "physical culture contest" in conjunction with a men's physique contest and a variety of sporting events in Madison Square Garden in New York City. Macfadden's female contestants, judged by artists and doctors, displayed their bodies wearing tight-fitting long underwear with sashes around their waists. The winner of that first contest, Emma Newkirk of Santa Monica, California, had a well-padded body without any visible muscular definition. She weighed 136 pounds and was 5'4½" tall. Macfadden held another women's contest at Madison Square Garden in 1905, and over the next three decades he sponsored a number of similar "physique" contests for women in which their bodies were judged on general healthfulness and appearance rather than muscularity.³²

The judging of beauty and fitness is part of the story of twentieth-century America. After Macfadden, and then the founding of the Miss America pageant in 1921 in Atlantic City, numerous physical culture entrepreneurs began including women's "physical culture" or "figure" contests alongside their men's bodybuilding events.³³ Jack Lalanne, for example, allowed women to train at his gym in Oakland when he opened it in 1936 and, to inspire his female clients to train harder, he held an occasional "beauty contest" for them.³⁴ At Muscle

Beach in the 1940s and 1950s, the bodies of young women were judged annually in the Miss Muscle Beach contest. According to Mim Scharlock, winner of the 1949 title, the women she competed against were not really weight trainers. Some of them came to Muscle Beach to participate in the acrobatics, she explained, but she was not aware of any who engaged in regular weight training to get ready for the Miss Muscle Beach contest.³⁵ For the most part these early contests bearing titles such as "Miss Body Beautiful," "Miss Physical Fitness," and later, in the 1960s and early 1970s, "Miss Americana" and "Miss Bikini" operated within a narrow, conservative definition of beauty. These early women competitors came on stage in high heels and did no poses that deliberately accentuated their muscles. Unlike the Miss America pageant, in which facial beauty played a major role in the choosing of the overall winner, most of the early body contests maintained the illusion that they were about judging fitness—not beauty—even though they were certainly not about muscle. Furthermore, for the most part, these pre-modern contests were not taken seriously by the men who controlled bodybuilding nor were they considered important by the writers and publishers who covered the sport. A classic example of the general lack of regard these early contests elicited within the bodybuilding community can be found in bodybuilding author Denie's report on the 1978 Miss World Physical Fitness Contest held in conjunction with the World Cup Professional Mr. Universe Contest.³⁶ After straightforwardly describing the men's contest, Denie's segue to the women's report began with, "On to the fanny-swingers in the Miss World Physical Fitness Division." Unlike Denie's positive coverage of the male athletes, there is no discussion of the relative merits of any of the women's bodies in his piece, although he does note that one of the women did a few ballet and acrobatic moves during her time on stage.³⁷

Although a number of these pre-modern "physique" contests continued to be held during the 1970s, other events and new social movements were coalescing to launch the modern women's bodybuilding movement. The women's rights movement, which had been greatly strengthened by the 1968 feminist protest of the Miss America Contest, played a role in the emergence of women's bodybuilding in this decade as did the passage of Title IX in 1973 and the resulting discovery—made by thousands of young women once they had access to sport—that they not only could play sports but that they should also begin weight training to become a better athlete.³⁸ Also important was Dr. Kenneth Coop-

er's discovery of the benefits of aerobic training and the personal fitness movement his work inspired in the 1970s as both men *and* women began regularly running, jogging, and thinking about the power of exercise to promote health and longevity.³⁹ Further, Austrian bodybuilder Arnold Schwarzenegger, made famous in *Pumping Iron*, and magazine publisher Joe Weider elevated men's bodybuilding to never-before-seen heights in the 1970s and inspired women as well as men to begin lifting weights for the sake of appearance and better health.⁴⁰

Henry McGhee and the United States Women's Physique Association

In tune with all these cultural changes was a young bodybuilder and strength coach named Henry McGhee who began working at the Canton YMCA in 1973. McGhee's interest in the physical potential of women began in childhood, he claimed, and was caused by his older sister Tammy—a strong, athletic girl who was faster than most of the boys in her school and was a terrific all-round athlete. As McGhee put it, “It just always seemed wrong to me that she got no encouragement to do sports simply because she was a girl.”⁴¹ McGhee, who earned a chemistry degree at Kent State University where he also assisted as a strength coach, had become a serious convert to weight training by the time he joined the Y in downtown Canton. Although he knew it was the Young Men's Christian Association, McGhee thought the inner-city facility should be open to everyone in the neighborhood and so began a campaign to allow women to join, which was ultimately successful. In November of 1974, McGhee began training a few women in a separate weight room that had been organized at the Y just for women. McGhee's goal in these early days, he explained, was not to create women bodybuilders. “I just wanted the women I worked with to feel better about themselves and to get in shape,” he reported.⁴² In an article in *Strength & Health* in 1977, McGhee expanded on this idea saying, “As it stands now, women in our society are not only weak but they know they're weak. This compounds their problems and leaves them open to attack and abuse. By training, they not only become stronger but their self-confidence grows at the same time which means their fears are eradicated.”⁴³

According to McGhee, the idea of holding some kind of a body contest for women began simply as a way for the women to set goals for their training and to show the results of their hard work in the gym. “I guess we had the first one in about 1975,” said McGhee, “but it wasn't

like a bodybuilding contest. I couldn't do girls in bikinis at the Y in the beginning, so the first couple of contests we had were very local and the girls competed in dresses.”⁴⁴ While *Sports Illustrated* later claimed that McGhee's early events were really just beauty contests, McGhee believed otherwise. As he explained to a *Strength & Health* reporter in 1977, he was running physique contests that differed from beauty contests in that the contestants were judged on presentation, general tone, and symmetry. “Any girl could win,” he claimed, “who was willing to train hard.”⁴⁵

On 27 September 1976, McGhee sponsored what he called a “women's body posing” contest for his club members and asked his women competitors to display their bodies before a panel of seven women judges that McGhee had chosen from among his group of trainers. According to a newspaper account of this event, what the judges were told to assess was whether the relative proportion of the different muscular groups was appropriate, whether the muscle itself was lean and firm, and whether there was too much subcutaneous fat.⁴⁶ It is worth noting that the size of the muscle was not a matter of specific consideration.

By 1977, McGhee had more than thirty women doing squats, bench presses and lat work at the Canton Y, and he had begun referring to the activity as “bodybuilding.”⁴⁷ By then he had also formed a women's fitness association for his athletes and called it the United States Women's Physique Association (USWPA). McGhee envisioned USWPA as a sanctioning body for women's physique and on 26 March 1977, as part of a strength extravaganza that included a men's powerlifting contest, he held the “Miss Canton Bodybuilding Contest.” This may be the first women's meet to have officially used the term “bodybuilding” in its title.⁴⁸ Later that same year, in October, McGhee held a regional contest called either the Ohio Regional Championships or the Miss Body Midwest Contest, a meet that has been incorrectly referred to in some sources as the first “national” women's bodybuilding contest.⁴⁹ The winner of the Ohio Regional was a nineteen-year-old former gymnast named Gina LaSpina, who at 5'7”, weighed about 125 pounds and resembled a lithe dancer far more than a twenty-first-century woman bodybuilder. According to an Associated Press story covering her victory, Gina took not only the overall championship but won four additional trophies for best poser and best body parts at the meet.⁵⁰

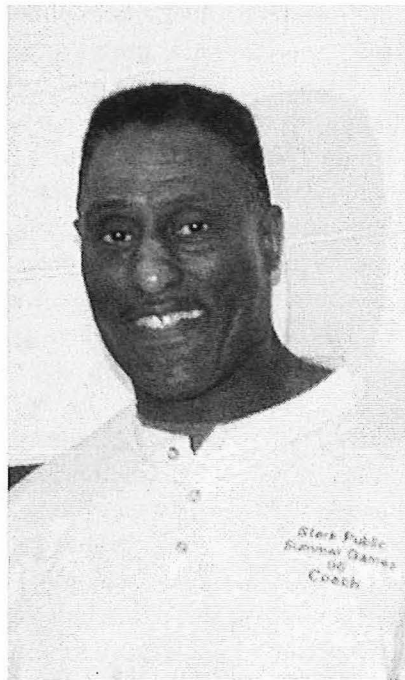
McGhee next announced that he would hold a national meet in the summer of 1978. Barrilleaux,

who'd been featured in *Strength & Health* by this time, was invited by McGhee to come and she was also encouraged to enter the contest by John Grimek, editor of *Muscular Development*, with whom she corresponded.⁵¹ As Doris remembers the meet on 17 June 1978, the contestants first walked onto the stage wearing nothing more than a two piece swimsuit and stood side by side. They then left the stage, and came back wearing either a sweat shirt or jacket so that "best legs" could be determined. Then, back they went again to take off their sweatshirts, don sweatpants, and return to the stage so that best upper body could be determined. Following this, Doris said they did their free posing routines; she performed to Helen Reddy's feminist anthem, "I Am Woman."⁵² In their free posing routines, however, the women were instructed to avoid using any "masculine poses" by McGhee who had told

the judges to deduct points if the women performed double-arm poses or clenched their fists.⁵³ It appears that a demonstration of flexibility may have also been considered important as Doris remarked in a letter later that year that they'd been asked to do splits and backbends.⁵⁴

The International Federation of Bodybuilders (IFBB) women's historian Steve Wennerstrom, who attended the 1978 meet as a reporter and saved his notes from that day, reports that there were fourteen women in the contest, divided into three height classes. The overall winner was twenty-three-year-old Marybeth Pritt, an amazingly lean physical education major and recent graduate of Bowling Green State University, who also won best back, best muscle tone, best waistline, and best chest. In a letter to Bill Jentz, publisher of the *Women and Strength Periodical*, Pritt explained that she'd trained only three months for the contest, working out on both Nautilus and free weights only three days a week. Pritt closed the letter, however, with a request that Jentz be cautious in his selection of photos as she wanted "no masculine poses printed, please—I am a female and proud of it."⁵⁵

Second place overall went to Gina LaSpina, winner of McGhee's 1977 meet, who was also judged best poser. Winner of the third height division was sev-



Henry McGhee, shown here in a photograph from 2010, still lives in Canton and is involved in a variety of coaching activities. He runs a training facility called Henry's Dynatorium and is active in the Special Olympics.

Photo courtesy Janet Brunecz

enteen-year-old Lisa Sweterlitsch who beat Barrilleaux in the 5'5"-and-under class. According to Doris she placed third in this class, and the trophy she took home that day reflects that memory. Interestingly, both Bill Jentz' article on the event in *Women and Strength Periodical No. 15* published in July 1978 and Steve Wennerstrom's notes from the contest suggest that Barrilleaux took second in her height class, beating five other women.⁵⁶ In either case, such a high placing at age forty-six was highly commendable. A self-portrait taken by Doris with her third-place trophy after the meet gives a good idea of her condition at this time.⁵⁷

Although Doris was delighted with her result in McGhee's meet, and in hindsight recognizes that her participation in the contest opened many doors for her, she was not happy with the meet itself (which, according to all reports was poorly organized) or with the judging standards used at the con-

test.⁵⁸ What Doris primarily objected to in Canton was the degree of leanness that McGhee had told the judges was desirable in women's bodybuilding. McGhee tried to explain his vision to a *Sports Illustrated* reporter in 1980 by stating, "Every woman has the same capacity for starving to death, but before she does, she's going to be very lean and muscular. That's what we want in our competitions, muscularity, with proportion. Anything we feel is heredity we don't consider—facial features, size of breasts, width of pelvis—and we're not concerned with traditional standards of femininity either."⁵⁹ Barrilleaux, in a letter to Bill Jentz after competing in another McGhee contest late in 1978, claimed that McGhee's ideal was an "extremely skinny, unfeminine contestant."⁶⁰

The Superior Physique Association

Following the Canton Nationals, and the publicity surrounding the event, Doris was invited to guest pose at men's bodybuilding competitions at least ten times in 1978 and as she attended these male contests she became convinced that she could do a better job of running women's bodybuilding than McGhee could.⁶¹ Doris, like many other women in the 1970s, had come to believe that women would only find true equality if they

could control their own sport experiences but she didn't act on the idea until she had a conversation at a men's meet with twenty-four-year-old Suzanne Kosak. Kosak, who had become interested in bodybuilding because of her boyfriend, a former Mr. Tampa, approached Barrilleaux after she'd finished guest posing and asked, "Why can't we have our own contests?"⁶² Doris, who'd been thinking the very same thing, suggested they meet and begin to plan.

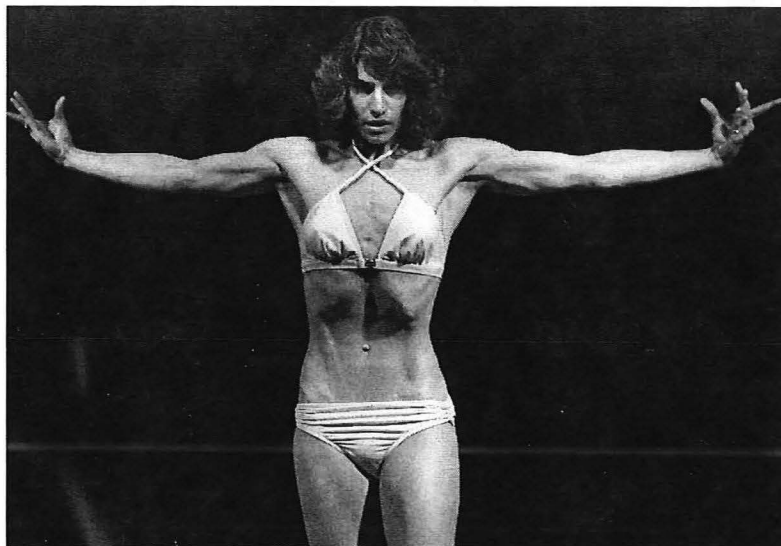
In October of 1978, Barrilleaux, with help from Kosak and another friend, Linda Gleason, formed the Southeastern Physique Association (SPA)—the first bodybuilding organization run for women by women. It is clear that in the choosing of the title the three women originally intended this to be a regional organization. However, interest in the sport was popping up throughout the United States and so in early 1979, Doris and the group began calling it the Superior Physique Association and they officially registered it under that name with the State of Florida the following October.⁶³ During the winter of 1978-1979 Doris, Suzanne, and Linda worked to find new members, met regularly, held elections, and developed written rules and judging standards. Although the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) controlled men's amateur bodybuilding at this time, Doris did not ask to affiliate her new group.

In December of 1978, shortly after SPA was first formed, Barrilleaux returned to Canton to compete in another of McGhee's contests, where she placed third.⁶⁴ At this time she was still giving some thought to trying to cooperate with McGhee, but the meet convinced her it would not be possible. In a letter to Bill Jentz, Barrilleaux wrote, "(McGhee's meet) was quite disorganized again with half the trophies missing. No one knew what the required poses were or exactly how they'd be judged."⁶⁵ Barrilleaux went on to say that McGhee had asked her to become the president of his organization, the USWPA, and to join her fledgling S.P.A. association with his. Doris declined, she told Jentz, because "all the women involved in S.P.A. want to keep it strictly a woman's organization without any men involved. I agree!"⁶⁶

In the spring of 1979 Barrilleaux published the first edition of *SPA News*, a Xeroxed newsletter of only four pages.⁶⁷ As the magazine grew in pages and geographic reach in the succeeding months, Barrilleaux used it to promote S.P.A. members, to cover their meets, and to communicate her ideas on judging,

drugs, and femininity. Through her exchanges with Vera Christensen, fifteen years earlier, Barrilleaux had experienced the body as contested terrain in which representations of strength—such as clenched fists and flexed muscles—were proprietary symbols of masculinity. As a result, she encouraged SPA to develop contest rules prohibiting contestants from flexing with clenched fists and from using more masculine poses such as double biceps shots, lat spreads and most particularly "the crab"—in which a bodybuilder leans slightly forward, brings his/her clenched fists together near the legs in the front of the body, and then simultaneously flexes the abdominals, trapezius, latissimus dorsi, deltoids, and other arm and trunk muscles.⁶⁸ SPA widely disseminated the new criteria and over the next several years Barrilleaux conducted judging clinics throughout the nation as SPA chapters opened in other states.⁶⁹

SPA's first official contest was the Ms. Brandon Physique Contest on 29 April 1979. Kathy Lewis, the twenty-six-year-old winner, and the twelve other women who competed that day (including Doris, who finished seventh) came on stage first in high heels—to affirm their femininity, according to Doris—but then removed their heels for the actual contest.⁷⁰ Local television crews and national news publications were on hand for the Brandon show, which was judged a great success by Doris and her SPA colleagues. "I remember organizing, competing, and then cooking for fifty people for the party at my home following the show," recalled Doris about the Brandon meet. "It was great fun and everyone was so enthusiastic."⁷¹



Gina LaSpina, winner of McGhee's 1977 contest, was a former gymnast who stood 5'7" tall and weighed 125 pounds. LaSpina's body was fairly close to Henry McGhee's stated ideal for women's bodybuilding in this era.

Photo by Steve Wennerstrom



SPA's first contest was the 1979 Miss Brandon Physique Contest. Kathy Lewis, center, won first place.; Doris, on the far right, finished seventh. The most controversial entrant was the former rugby player, Laura Combes, second from left, whose level of muscularity was considered shocking for a woman at this time.

In the months that followed, SPA sponsored almost a meet per month through the end of the year. The Ms. Florida Physique Contest was held May 26; the Miss Sun Coast Body Beautiful on June 23; the Ms. Temple Terrace Body Beautiful on July 28—the first meet to include a teenage and senior division along with the open contest; the Miss Tampa on August 25; the Miss Gold Coast on October 13; the Miss North Florida on October 20; and then in April 1980 they held the Miss Southern USA meet.⁷² By the spring of 1980 SPA had become a well-defined and successful association. However, other entities were also becoming interested in the market potential of women's bodybuilding.

The Struggle for Control of Women's Bodybuilding

In the summer of 1979, Barrilleaux began hearing about new women's contests that were being planned in other parts of the United States. Gold's Gym in Santa Monica, California, decided to host what they called "The First Women's World Bodybuilding Championships" at the Embassy Auditorium in Los Angeles on June 16 of that year. Held in conjunction with the IFBB Junior Mr. America contest, only twelve women entered the "world" event and they were all from California. The contest was organized in four rounds with twenty points possible in each round. Round one was a bench press contest to demonstrate that the women were "real athletes."⁷³ Each woman was required to take sixty per-

cent of her bodyweight and do a single repetition to qualify. They then had to do ten more repetitions to attain the full twenty points for that round. In round two the women appeared on stage in high heels for a side-by-side comparison with four quarter turns, again worth twenty points. Round three, the last of the pre-judging rounds, consisted of a brief set of compulsory poses determined by the Gold's Gym organizers. That evening during the men's contest the women each had ninety seconds of time for free posing to music in front of a crowd estimated at about two thousand people. Master of Ceremonies, bodybuilder Steve Davis, reminded the audience that the women were true pioneers, "they have performed here tonight without any previous framework or criteria . . . they are all magnificent."⁷⁴ Lisa Lyons, of Century City, California, won the competition and "brought down the house," according to Steve Wennerstrom, "because of her grace and fluidity of form."⁷⁵

Lyons, who was a frequent trainer at Gold's Gym in Santa Monica, was also an exceptionally bright woman and she quickly seized on the marketing potential the new title brought her. In the months that followed her victory, Lyons appeared on several television shows, was featured in all the muscle magazines, wrote a book about weight training for women entitled *Lisa Lyon's Body Magic*, and helped to popularize the new women's sport in a variety of ways, including serving briefly as an administrator. Although some of her choices were controversial, like her appearance in *Playboy* in

October 1980, and her participation in the creation of Robert Mapplethorpe's book of nude photographs called *Lady: Lisa Lyon* in 1983, Lyon's lithe, 5'3", 105-pound body helped establish the idea that "women's bodybuilding" no longer needed to be considered oxymoronic.⁷⁶ Lyons, sociologist Leslie Heywood contends, was the first woman to convince large numbers of the public that the built female body could be a site of men's desire and appropriate female aspirations.⁷⁷

Barrilleaux didn't attend the California contest as she was making plans to attend a different show later in the summer that was being hosted by George Snyder, promoter of the IFBB's prestigious Mr. Olympia contests. Snyder, known to be a fan of the less muscular, more beauty-oriented contests, told Barrilleaux that his meet on 18 August 1979, in Warminster, Pennsylvania, would be the first professional contest for women and that she needed to understand that "it is definitely not [Snyder's emphasis] a 'physique' type contest where women do muscular posing." Continuing he explained, "If you would like to call it a beauty contest you could, however it is a beauty contest for women bodybuilders."⁷⁸ Barrilleaux decided to enter the contest despite Snyder's admonition that "no poses which highlight muscularity" were supposed to be allowed and that the competitors would have to compete in high heels. Although she was interested in seeing how the contest went, Doris also had another reason for the trip to Pennsylvania. The previous year, Snyder had formed his own women's organization and had applied to the IFBB for recognition for his "Women's Bodybuilding Association" (WBA).⁷⁹

With Mr. Olympia Arnold Schwarzenegger as master of ceremonies, Snyder's contest was going smoothly until the audacious and somewhat mesomorphic Laura Combes, an elite women's rugby player turned bodybuilder who also lived in Florida, took the stage. Combes complied with the high-heel requirement and open-hand posing prohibitions during prejudging but in the evening

show she decided to defy Snyder's rules. When she appeared in front of the loud and knowledgeable crowd, Combes shocked them with her muscle size. The crowd began cheering wildly and in response she kicked off her heels, hit a double biceps, and finished with the crab shot, displaying more female muscle than anyone had ever seen in the modern era.⁸⁰ Despite her immense popularity with the crowd that evening, the judges placed her sixth. The winner of this first pro show was Patsy Chapman, who took home a check for \$2500. However, it was truly Combes' show; she had, metaphorically, just opened women's bodybuilding's version of Pandora's box.⁸¹ Unhappy with the final scoring, Combes took a parting shot at Snyder as she walked off stage that evening, "If you think *I'm* muscular," she yelled to the audience, "just wait until you see the women who will follow me!"⁸²

Combe's flaunting of the "femininity" rules concerned many. During the contest, Mr. Olympia Frank Zane had told Barrilleaux, "The world is not ready for women's bodybuilding."⁸³ Snyder complained that Combes' flaunting of the rules would mean bad publicity for the sport and for his Olympus Gym where the number of weight-training women had recently increased substantially.⁸⁴ Although they were friends, and Combes had competed in some of SPA's first contests in Florida—winning Miss Brandon in 1979—Barrilleaux was also troubled by the archetype she represented for the sport. "What worries me in trying to get a new thing like this off the ground," Doris told a reporter later that year, "is that women will look at Laura and get turned off to bodybuilding. They will say, 'I don't want to look like that.' It will scare them. It could kill the whole movement."⁸⁵

Combe's boldness and development didn't slow down the growth of interest in women's bodybuilding, however. As the year progressed, Barrilleaux was inundated with letters requesting information about the organization and she added dozens of new subscribers to her *SPA News* mailing



Doris took this self-portrait of herself with her trophy from Canton the day after she arrived home. Her physical condition at age forty-six was, indeed, remarkable.

list. Realizing that the administrative load of her organization was increasing, Doris retired from competition and dedicated herself to promoting women's bodybuilding. She approached television shows, sent articles to newspapers, and even wrote repeatedly to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports volunteering to work with them to promote weight training for women.⁸⁶ By 1980 SPA had chapters in almost every state in America and in several countries overseas. When the IFBB ran its first Ms. Olympia in Philadelphia in August of 1980 and chose the slender, overtly feminine, and charismatic Rachel McLish as the first bearer of that title, the sport of women's bodybuilding truly exploded.⁸⁷

Attracted by the publicity accorded to women's bodybuilding and its commercial potential, both the IFBB, which controlled professional men's bodybuilding, and the AAU—then on its last legs as a governing body for amateur sport in the United States—each independently formed a women's committee in 1979 that were direct competitors to both SPA and Henry McGhee's USWPA.⁸⁸ The AAU's bodybuilding oversight committee, called the National Physique Association (NPA) named Lisa Lyons as the first chairwoman of its new women's committee. In an open letter to women bodybuilders printed in *Iron Man* magazine and repeated almost verbatim in *Muscle Digest*, Lyons declared the group's political independence of the male-run NPA and explained that because of the "work I have done in the gym, in competition, and in the media to establish women's bodybuilding as a serious and respected sport, the AAU also invested me with a responsibility: to promote that sport and support its athletes in developing in the direction that they choose."⁸⁹

Almost simultaneously Christine Zane, wife of Mr. Olympia Frank Zane, was chosen as chair of the new IFBB women's committee.⁹⁰ Christine, who began dating Frank when she was in junior college, had been encouraged by him to begin doing some weight training to improve her already genetically-blessed figure. After entering and winning several beauty contests in Florida where they then lived, Christine entered and won the Miss Americana title in 1967. Three years later, after she and Frank married and moved to southern California where she taught women's exercise classes, Christine took the 1970 Miss Universe Bikini crown and then retired from competition.⁹¹ Although Christine was never a competitor in what we would define as a "modern" women's contest, she was active as a judge at women's physique shows at the end of the 1970s.

Barrilleaux, who agreed to serve on both com-

mittees simultaneously, initially greeted the appearance of the new women's committees with enthusiasm. In an article in *SPA News* in December of 1979 entitled "Do You Feel Left Out of Bodybuilding?" Barrilleaux told her readers that she had been one of five women chosen to serve with Christine Zane on the new IFBB women's committee and that "This affiliation will be most beneficial to SPA members as they will have more contests available to them with the added incentive of substantial prizes."⁹²

A New Landscape for Women's Bodybuilding

In an election in 1980, Barrilleaux replaced Christine Zane as chair of the IFBB Women's Committee, a position to which she was reelected in 1981 and 1982.⁹³ As chair of the IFBB's Women's Committee Doris became increasingly involved with the IFBB leadership in the promotion of women's contests both in the United States and abroad. She corresponded regularly with IFBB President Ben Weider and IFBB Vice President Oscar State and felt in the beginning that the three of them shared a common vision for the sport.⁹⁴

On the amateur front, however, the AAU—the umbrella organization under which Lisa Lyon's National Physique Committee for Women functioned—was crumbling.⁹⁵ In January of 1976, the IFBB had issued a statement declaring that all amateur bodybuilding in the United States was to be under the control of Tom Minichiello, who had founded a group called the American Amateur Bodybuilding Association.⁹⁶ However, the AAU was also sponsoring amateur men's contests during these same years through its National Physique Committee of the AAU, Inc. (NPC) and this led to considerable confusion with fans and the public. With the passage of the Amateur Sport Act in 1978, the IFBB and AAU entered into a tenuous alliance that ceded the rights to all amateur contests to the AAU and all professional contests to the IFBB. Two years later, however, after the IFBB challenged the right of the AAU to continue to be the sole promoter of amateur contests, the NPC, under Jim Manion, dropped their AAU affiliation and Lisa Lyon's women's committee was then discontinued by the AAU.⁹⁷

IFBB president Ben Weider then asked Barrilleaux to take on the task of forming a new amateur women's association under the umbrella of the IFBB. Barrilleaux agreed and with help from Susan Fry and Kimberly Cassidy, the American Federation of Women Bodybuilders (AFWB) was incorporated as a non-profit organization in December of 1980.⁹⁸ Because she ini-

tially believed she would be able to maintain autonomy for her committee underneath the IFBB's umbrella, Doris' closed down SPA, although she decided to keep publishing *SPA News* which became the official publication of the AFWB.⁹⁹

Barrilleaux's new organization for amateur female physique athletes was remarkably similar philosophically to SPA. Under Doris' direction the group quickly created a constitution, bylaws, and judging criteria—all largely modeled on SPA's standards.¹⁰⁰ In a membership flyer produced in 1982, Barrilleaux described that process and how the group had had to struggle for autonomy:

Within one year there were AFWB State Representatives in nearly every state . . . The women worked hard and long, many times learning by trial and error, to establish their own rules and guidelines. They stood up for their rights when old-time promoters denied their right to govern their own sport. They bent over backwards to work with the promoters who thought women had no place onstage at a bodybuilding competition, and also with promoters who insisted that the women were no different from the men, and should be judged exactly like the men—by the men's guidelines. . . .

In the past the women have worked behind the scenes anonymously and were kept in the shadows of the men . . . In a male-dominated sport, some evidently felt that the women were neither capable nor worthy of managing their own sport. Thanks to AFWB and IFBB perseverance, it has become evident that they were wrong.¹⁰¹

However, the halcyon days of the AFWB were remarkably short. A letter from Ben Weider published in the April 1981 issue of *SPA News* confirmed that "the American Federation of Women Bodybuilders has been recognized as the governing body for women's amateur bodybuilding in America." However, Weider continued, it was understood that the AFWB "will work closely and co-operate with the National Physique Committee of the USA, Inc. (formerly National Physique Committee of



Seventy-nine year old Doris Barrilleaux with Joe and Betty Weider in July 2011 at the opening of the Weider Museum at the University of Texas in Austin. Photo by Bob Gardner

the AAU, Inc.)"¹⁰² Its chairman, Jim Manion, was the North American vice president of the IFBB, and had proven to be a savvy meet promoter and attracted many sponsors to the sport. Manion understood the economics of bodybuilding as well as anyone and unfortunately for Barrilleaux, he and a growing number of IFBB officials began to question the need for a totally autonomous women's organization.¹⁰³

Things became complicated for the AFWB in 1982 when the AAU attempted to once again gain control of amateur bodybuilding by issuing sanctions for men's, women's, and couples' bodybuilding contests. Doris claimed in an editorial in *SPA News* that their interest came from the fact that "the addition of women's and couples' competitions had turned the sport into a top money-maker with national media coverage."¹⁰⁴ At this point in time the AFWB was supposed to be the sole agency granting sanctions for women's meets. However, as Doris explains in her editorial, in addition to the AAU, even some NPC and IFBB officials refused to honor the AFWB's sovereignty and would not "co-operate or recognize the women as controlling their own sport."¹⁰⁵ By 1 January 1982, Doris complained that, "I am receiving reports that some NPC men are still grant-

ing women's sanctions and memberships even though the NPC officials have agreed to work with the AFWB."¹⁰⁶ Even some of the top women were confused. Carla Dunlap, for example, wrote Doris at one point to ask, "do women have to be registered with both the Nat'l Physique Committee and the AFWB, or just one or the other, [and] if so which?" Dunlap then added, "I hope I am not the only person who is not totally clear on what's happening. . . ."¹⁰⁷ It's hardly surprising that the AFWB was unable to maintain sanction authority over women's bodybuilding since so many women's contests were held at the same time, and in the same venue as a men's contest and there was a certain lack of logic in having to have two sanctions for the same event. The other factor that made it difficult for the AFWB was the rapid growth and expansion of the sport; by 1981, there were an estimated eighty contests and eight hundred competitors in women's bodybuilding.¹⁰⁸

Although Barrilleaux's position as AFWB Committee Chair gave her considerable power, she was still trying to operate a women's association within a larger association and community dominated by men. Doris ran her own meetings, but a few male bodybuilding officials generally attended, and though these male officials rarely said anything during the women's meetings, their presence, Doris believed, prevented her members from speaking as freely as they might.¹⁰⁹ In the early days of the sport, competitors to most of the early shows were *invited* by bodybuilding promoters and officials to the big contests rather than qualifying.¹¹⁰ It was, therefore, inevitable that such men would be viewed as social gatekeepers by the women attending AFWB meetings.¹¹¹ Women bodybuilders had very few ways to financially capitalize on their involvement in the sport (There were still relatively few pro contests.) except through doing appearances, guest posing, and modeling or "representing" products, all of which made it difficult for women competitors to speak out and become identified as someone opposed to male interests.¹¹² Wayne DeMillia, one of the IFBB officials who regularly attended the AFWB meetings, told Barrilleaux explicitly, "We have the only game in town, you play it our way or else."¹¹³

As the NPC grew in strength under Jim Manion's direction, pressure began to build to move women's bodybuilding totally under its control. The NPC's interest in assuming control of women's bodybuilding wasn't just the question of who controlled the sanctions. Some IFBB officials had begun to question the aesthetic standard for women's bodybuilding that Doris tried to enforce. In forming the AFWB, Doris had

first suggested using essentially the same judging standards that she had adopted for SPA. However, as women trained longer and began building more muscle people in many corners of the sport began pushing for more "muscular" standards. Barrilleaux suggested that it was time to recognize two kinds of women bodybuilders, those who wanted to build the most muscular bodies possible and those who wanted to become fit and sleek, but not necessarily fully developed. Doris wanted to call the two groups "bodybuilders" and "body sculptors." As she wrote, "In my attempts to establish two classes I have met with much opposition. This opposition came from those encouraging women to develop to their maximum potential."¹¹⁴ Although the idea had merit, and Doris also saw it as a possible solution to the problem of anabolic drug use, she could not get the IFBB to agree to the two divisions in the early 1980s. So, when the official AFWB rules were published in *SPA News*, Barrilleaux pushed the smaller and more feminine aesthetic, writing in Rule Number One: "The judges will not be looking for the most muscular or vascular woman," and in Rule Number Two: "Body fat should not be so low as to cause the women to lose their breasts."¹¹⁵ Although the rules found favor with Ben Weider and many women competitors, not everyone was pleased with them. Some of the larger and more muscular women competitors and writer Bill Dobbins, then editor of *Flex* magazine, for example, were highly incensed by the AFWB's proposed judging standards and conservative approach.¹¹⁶ Over the next several years the question of how to judge women bodybuilders would become increasingly politicized and publicized. However, the full story of that controversy is beyond the scope of this essay.

In 1982, as Doris found herself increasingly attacked both for her stand in favor of the smaller, and less highly defined aesthetic, and for her position on women's right to self-rule, she decided to resign as AFWB Chair and turn the group over to Susan Fry, the former AFWB secretary.¹¹⁷ However, although she resigned as Chair, she stayed on the AFWB Committee albeit not in the titular role, and she continued attending and judging at both men's and women's contests until 1984.¹¹⁸

It is interesting to consider what might have happened to women's bodybuilding had Barrilleaux and her colleagues decided to go back to their SPA roots and run a separate women's organization when she lost control of the AFWB. Could they have made it work? Bodybuilding's sister sport of powerlifting went through remarkably similar struggles in the early 1980s as

women powerlifters—and a few men who wanted drug testing—ultimately decided that they could never convince the dominant group, the United States Powerlifting Federation, to change its position against drug testing and so decided to separate and form their own autonomous federation.¹¹⁹ The American Drug Free Powerlifting Association (ADFPA), which later changed its name to USA Powerlifting, has now become the largest and most prestigious association in the United States and has had strict drug testing programs in place since the beginning.¹²⁰ We can't help but wonder what would have happened if the members of the AFWB had similarly deserted the IFBB and created an organization that allowed women to compete in the two different kinds of contests Doris had envisioned. Working against Doris' ability to make such a move, of course, was the international reach of the IFBB and the economic and political power they possessed because of the Weider publications. In 1984 the IFBB shut the AFWB down entirely and transferred the group's \$30,000 in savings to the NPC and Jim Manion.¹²¹ Barrilleaux protested the move, of course, but reports that IFBB President Ben Weider cited the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 for the shift and explained to her that since the NPC had been designated as bodybuilding's sole national governing body, it was actually illegal for the AFWB to exist.¹²² Given the developments in powerlifting in this same era, Weider's assertion begs further research and analysis.

Later Years

As she stepped away from her heavy administrative load, Doris became more involved with writing and photography. She wrote articles for various bodybuilding publications including Joe Weider's *Muscle & Fitness*, *Shape*, and *Flex* and was given a regular column called "Curves and Peaks" in Dan Lurie's *Muscle Training Illustrated*.¹²³ In 1983, Barrilleaux released her second exercise book, *Forever Fit*, and in one of her last roles in the administration of bodybuilding, Barrilleaux assisted the IFBB and had a cameo appearance in the film *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, which filmed in Las Vegas, Nevada, in December of that year.¹²⁴ Doris' transition away from administration was also due to Dan Lurie's invitation to her to edit a new women's bodybuilding magazine he planned, called *Body Talk*. Doris threw herself into the project and the first—and only—issue appeared in the spring of 1984.¹²⁵

Over the intervening years, Barrilleaux, who turned eighty in August of 2011, has continued to lift weights and to ride her bicycle or swim daily. Although

she and Sterling divorced in 1987, she continues to live in her lovely home on the Alafia River where she spends her free time working on digital photography, doing all her own yard work, and writing. For the past several years she has been working on a digital autobiography which is now selling as a DVD.¹²⁶

Bodybuilding official Oscar State observed in a letter to Steve Wennerstrom shortly after the latter was named IFBB historian, that he wondered if Steve was going to tackle the problem of trying to determine who had been "the pioneer in getting women's bodybuilding started on the competitive level."¹²⁷ State's question was driven, of course, by the very reason that Wennerstrom was named historian for women's bodybuilding in 1982.¹²⁸ Women's bodybuilding evolved so quickly and in so many different parts of the country simultaneously, that it has proven difficult to trace the true historical roots of the sport. Did Barrilleaux host the first women's contest? No. That honor belongs, we would argue, to Henry McGhee. However, in terms of "forming" the sport, bringing women together in common cause, establishing judging standards, and being the most visible and long-term advocate for the sport, probably no one has done more than Doris Barrilleaux, called by many "the First Lady of Bodybuilding."

NOTES:

During the course of this project both authors interviewed Doris Barrilleaux via telephone and in person. For clarity we have referred to the interviewer by last name rather than simply saying "by the author."

1. Doris Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 12 August 2011.
2. Henry McGhee interview with Todd, 14 August 2011. Only three women at the meet were from outside Ohio. See also: Nicholas Chare: "Women's Bodybuilding: Toward a Radical Politics of Muscle," *Limina*, 10 (2004): 52-69; at: www.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/previous/volumes_610/volume_10?f=73871.
3. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 12 August 2011.
4. For an excellent discussion of the influence of women's bodybuilding on beauty, fashion and popular culture see: Allen Guttmann, "Sports, Eros and Popular Culture," *Stanford Humanities Review* 6, no. 2 (1995), viewed at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/6-2/html/guttmann.html>.
5. Ibid. See also: Chare, "Women's Bodybuilding," 52-69; Leslie Heywood, *Body-makers: A Cultural Anatomy of Women's Bodybuilding* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Maria R. Lowe, *Women of Steel: Women's Bodybuilding and the Struggle for Self Definition* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); and Joanna Freuh, Laurie Fierstein and Judith Stein, eds., *Picturing the Modern Amazon* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998).
6. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess, 5 November 2010. Women did not begin playing full-court basketball until 1971. To encourage cooperation in women, basketball rule makers only allowed girls to dribble three times before they were forced to pass the ball. See: Sally Jenkins, "History of Women's Basketball," NBA.com at: http://www.nba.com/about_us/jenkins_feature.html.
7. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess, 5 November 2010. Barrilleaux idolized Tarzan as portrayed by five-time Olympic gold medal swimmer Johnny Weissmuller in a dozen films made in the 1930s and '40s. See Michael K. Bohn, *Heroes and Ballyhoo: How the Golden Age of the 1920s Transformed American Sports* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009).
8. Vickie Lynn Barrilleaux was born on 3 September 1949 when Doris was 18. Darlene Kay Barrilleaux was born on 9 May 1952; Gary Dean Barrilleaux was born on 15 May

1953 and died on 22 May 1987 in a motorcycle accident; Jerry Wayne Barrilleaux was born on 5 December 1955 and died 28 December 1992 from AIDS; and Don Ray Barrilleaux was born on 19 July 1958.

9. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess, 5 November 2010.

10. Barrilleaux began weight training to improve her health and to help with weight control and appearance. Insight into the use of body technologies to discipline, control, and restrain the body can be found in: Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds., L.H. Martin, H. Gutman & P.H. Hutton (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49; and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

11. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess, 5 November 2010.

12. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 12 August 2011.

13. Ibid.

14. Barrilleaux email message to Harguess, 5 December 2010; Vera Christensen, "To the Ladies," *Strength and Health*, ed., Bob Hoffman (York, PA: Strength and Health Publishing Company, 1956-1986). Vera Christensen was the wife of 1951 AAU Mr. Florida bodybuilding champion Al Christensen. They owned and operated a successful gym in Winter Haven, Florida. Vera Christensen died on June 30, 2011 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

15. Barrilleaux email message to Harguess, 5 December 2010.

16. Vera Christensen, "To the Ladies," *Strength & Health*, February 1963, 38.

Barrilleaux also appeared in Vera Christensen, "To the Ladies," *Strength & Health*, April 1964, 55.

17. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess, 5 November 2010.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid. For discussion about the acceptance of women weight trainers in male gymnasiums, see Doris Barrilleaux, "Vive La Difference," *Muscle Training Illustrated*, January 1986, 126; Alan M. Klein, *Little Big Men: Bodybuilding Subculture and Gender Construction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 160-162; and Lowe, *Women of Steel*, 25-26.

20. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 August 2011. According to Doris, no one was called a "personal trainer" in those days, but that was essentially what she did for other women at the club.

21. Ibid. Barrilleaux attended bodybuilding contests with her husband and says other women attended with their husbands.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Barrilleaux email message to Harguess, 20 May 2011.

25. Ibid; Barrilleaux claims Falcon insisted on shooting all photographs outdoors in natural lighting and that he ate the same foods for the same meals, hardly ever varying his diet. Falcon had many photographs published in *Strength & Health*, *Iron Man* and other major physique magazines. A practicing nudist, he also sold photographs to various naturist publications like *Sunshine and Health*.

26. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 August 2011.

27. Bonnie Day, "Women, Too, Need Exercise," *Muscular Development*, 14, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 1977), 50 (photos by Dick Falcon); Dick Falcon, "Keeping Youthful at Forty-Six," *Strength and Health*, 45, no. 2 (Feb/March 1977), 49.

28. Bob Hoffman, "Fresh Air and Sunshine," *Muscular Development* 15, no. 4 (July/Aug 1977), 24-26 (photos by Dick Falcon).

29. Doris Barrilleaux and Jim Murray, *Inside Weight Training for Women* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978) (photos by Dick Falcon).

30. Barrilleaux email message to Harguess, 20 May 2011. Doris is still active as a photographer and works as photo editor for *Florida Muscle News*. She thinks that no other photographer has taken as many cover shots.

31. Steve Wennerstrom, "Women's Bodybuilding: A Contemporary History," in *Picturing the Modern Amazon*, 62-71.

32. For more information on these early contests see: Jan Todd, "Bernarr Macfadden: Reformer of Feminine Form," *Iron Game History* 1, no. 4&5, 3-8.

33. For information on the history of the Miss America pageant see: Sarah Banet-Weiser, *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World: Beauty Pageants and National Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

34. Dan Levin, "Here She Is, Miss, Well, What?" *Sports Illustrated*, March 17, 1980, 64-75.

35. Interview with Mim Scharlock with Todd, San Antonio, Texas, 15 August 2011.

36. Denie's full name is Dennis Walters.

37. Denie, "World Cup Bounty Hunters," *Muscle Training Illustrated*, January 1878, 19-20. See also: Steve Wennerstrom, "Women's Bodybuilding: The Beginning, Part I," *Flex*, October 1984, 25-27, 74-77.

38. Heywood, *Bodybuilders*, 27. See also: Linda Napikoski, "Miss America Protest: Feminists at the Miss America Pageant," viewed at: http://womenshistory.about.com/od/feminism/a/miss_america_protest.htm.

39. Benjamin G. Rader, "The Quest for Self-Sufficiency and the New Strenuousness: Reflections on the Strenuous Life of the 1970s and the 1980s," *Journal of Sport History* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 255-266.

40. For a discussion of the importance of Arnold Schwarzenegger, see Ellexis Boyle, "The Intertextual Terminator: The Role of Film in Branding Arnold Schwarzenegger," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34, no. 1 (January 2010): 42-60.

41. McGhee interview with Todd, 14 August 2011.

42. Ibid.

43. Mike Hudak, "Female Bodybuilders," *Strength & Health*, April-May 1977, 56.

44. 41. McGhee interview with Todd, 14 August 2011.

45. Levin, "Here She Is," 64-65; Hudak, "Female Bodybuilders," 7.

46. Paul Lehman, "Women Benefitting from Weight-lifting Techniques," *Evening Independent* (Massillon, Ohio), 1 October 1976.

47. Ibid. An article in the *Journal News* (Hamilton, Ohio), entitled "Great Way to Stay in Shape," Say Women about Weight Lifting," 12 December 1976, claims that McGhee was working with about one hundred women by this time. The same article also appeared in the *Steubenville (Ohio) Herald Star*, 27 November 1976.

48. "Powerlift Contest Scheduled," *Steubenville (Ohio) Herald Star*, 19 March 1977.

49. McGhee interview with Todd, 14 August 2011; McGhee described the meet as the "Ohio Regional Physique Championship." Al Thomas and Steve Wennerstrom concur in *The Female Physique Athlete: A History to Date—1977 Through 1983* (Absolutely/Women's Physique Publication, 1973), 230. A short article on Gina LaSpina titled "Muscle-bound Raquel Welch," *Chronicle Telegraph* (Elyria, Ohio), 25 October 1977, called the meet the "Miss Body Midwest Contest."

50. "Muscle-bound Raquel Welch." See also, Bill Jentz, "Women's Physique Contest Update," *Women and Strength Periodical* (December, 1978), 3.

51. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 August 2011.

52. Men's bodybuilding, it is worth noting, was not judged in the same manner in this era. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 August 2011.

53. Steve Wennerstrom interview with Todd, September 8, 2011; and Bill Jentz, "Special 1978 National Women's Physique Championship—Mary Beth Pritt Issue" *Women and Strength Periodical*, no. 15 (July 1978), 4.

54. Barrilleaux letter to Bill Jentz, 9 December 1978. Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.

55. Mary Beth Pritt letter to Bill Jentz, June 29, 1978, Steve Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center.

56. Steve Wennerstrom handwritten notes from 1978 Canton meet, Steve Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center; Jentz, "Special 1978," 3; and Barrilleaux email to Todd, August 17, 2011.

57. Barrilleaux's measurements: 5'4", 123lbs, 36-24-36, sent in email to Harguess on 20 May 2011; Doris Barrilleaux, "The Southeastern Physique Association," *Women and Strength Periodical*, August 30, 1979.

58. In a letter to Bill Jentz late in 1978, Doris told him she'd been asked to guest pose ten times since her appearance in Canton. Barrilleaux letter to Jentz, 9 December 1978, Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.

59. Levin, "Here She Is," 74.

60. Barrilleaux letter to Jentz.

61. Ibid., Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 12 August 2011.

62. Bill Jentz, "Southeastern Physique Association S.P.A. Issue," *Women and Strength Periodical*, no. 35 (30 August 1979), 6; and Doris Barrilleaux, "The Southeastern Physique Association," *Women and Strength Periodical*, no. 35 (30 August 1979), 7.

63. Digital copy of "Registration of Trademark" certificate issued by State of Florida on 23 October 1979. Barrilleaux Digital Collection, Stark Center.

64. Barrilleaux letter to Jentz.

65. Ibid. Barrilleaux added that McGhee had removed the "requirement for splits and backbends this time," for which she was grateful. Organization was not, apparently, McGhee's strong suit as Dan Levin's article on McGhee's 1979 Women Nationals also discusses the chaotic nature of the contest and tells how McGhee sat right beside the judges during the contest to coach them on judging. Levin, "Here She Is," 74.

66. Barrilleaux letter to Jentz.

67. Doris Barrilleaux, *SPA News* 1, no. 1 (April 1979); Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 12 August 2011.

68. Ibid. Bodybuilding author Bill Dobbins led a campaign in the first decade of the twenty-first century to have the lat spread recognized as a compulsory pose in women's bodybuilding, see: Bill Dobbins, "Why No Lat Spread for Women," *Bodybuilding.com* at: <http://www.bodybuilding.com/fun/billdobbins4.htm>.

69. Ibid; Doris Barrilleaux, "Appearance Schedule" (1978-1979), Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.
70. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 August 2011. See also: Bill Jentz, "Southeastern Physique," 2-3.
71. Chris Kennedy, "The First Lady," at: www.fortunecity.com/olympia/mara dona/77/dorisox.htm.
72. Jentz, "Southeastern Physique Association," 2-4.
73. Steve Wennerstrom, "Women's World Bodybuilding Championships," *Iron Man* 39, no.1 (November 1979), 35. It was not uncommon in AAU men's contests in the middle years of the twentieth century to require bodybuilders to demonstrate athleticism; see: John Fair, "Mr. America: Idealism or Racism: Color Consciousness and the AAU Mr. America Contest, 1939-1982," *Iron Game History* 8, no. 1 (June/July 2003): 18-19.
74. Wennerstrom, "Women's World Bodybuilding Championship," 35.
75. Ibid.
76. Mario Casilli, "Body Beautiful," *Playboy* 27, no. 10 (October 1980), 103-107; Robert Maplethorpe, *Lady: Lisa Lyons* (St. Martin's Press, 1991); and Lisa Lyons, *Lisa Lyon's Body Magic* (New York: Book Sales, 1983).
77. Heywood, *Bodymakers*, 28, 92, 110. Although the sexualized commoditization of Lyon's body may be read as an act of complicity with gender's asymmetrical power relations, Lyon saw it as an act of defiance, according to author Leslie Heywood. For additional information on Lyons, see: Steve Wennerstrom, "Women's Bodybuilding: A Contemporary History," 64-69.
78. George Snyder letter to Barrilleaux, (no date) Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.
79. Wennerstrom, "Women's Bodybuilding: A Contemporary History." For a discussion of the philosophy of the WBA see the *Official Program for the 1978 United States Bodybuilding Championships* (Warrington, PA: George Snyder, Olympus Gym and Spa, 1978), 5; an ad for the 1979 Best in the World contest appears on page nine of the same program. Steve Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center.
80. Levin, "Here She Is," 72.
81. Wennerstrom, "Women's Bodybuilding," A Contemporary History," 66.
82. Charles Gaines and George Butler, *Pumping Iron II: The Unprecedented Woman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 34.
83. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess, 5 November 2010.
84. Levin, "Here She Is," 73.
85. Frank Bentayou, "Another Look at those Women Weight Trainers," *Tampa Tribune*, 23 November 1979.
86. Glenn Swengross letter to Doris Barrilleaux, 12 April 1979, Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.
87. Wennerstrom, "Women's Bodybuilding: A Contemporary History," 66.
88. Although the USWPA continued to host meets in Canton through 1980, they were not successful at making their organization truly national. Two issues of a magazine inexplicably called *Sartorius* were produced, one in October of 1979 and the other in March of 1980; Steve Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center.
89. Lisa Lyon, "Lisa Lyon—National Women's Physique Chairperson," *Iron Man*, 39, no. 4 (May 1980), 31.
90. Tony Blinn, "A Brief History of the IFBB as told through its International Congress Reports," viewed at: <http://www.ifbb.com/history/congresshistory.htm>.
91. "Frank and Christine Zane-Biography," *The Official Frank Zane Website*, viewed at: http://www.frankzane.com/c_f_biography.htm.
92. Ibid. Doris began as a regional chairwoman for Lyons and the AAU committee that same year.
93. Doris Barrilleaux, *SPA News* 2, no. 7 (1980).
94. Barrilleaux interview with Todd.
95. By October 1980 Lyons was calling her National Physique Association "The National Physique Committee for Women." Lisa Lyons letter to Barrilleaux, reprinted in "Letters to the Ladies," *SPA News* 2, no. 7&8 (October/November 1980), 2.
96. Ben Weider, "Notice to All American Bodybuilders, January 1976." Typescript inserted in *IFBB Report to All Nations*, no. 11, January 1976. This is the official magazine of the IFBB.
97. Ben Weider, "Report from the President of the IFBB," published in *George Snyder & Olympus present the 1978 United States Bodybuilding Championships*, program booklet (Warrington, PA: George Snyder, Olympus Gym and Spa, 1978). Weider explains, "After more than 30 years, the AAU decided to affiliate with the IFBB in an overwhelming vote. The AAU is now the official federation . . . that will have the exclusive right to organize amateur contests." Barrilleaux, *SPA News* 2, no. 7 (1980), 2.
98. "American Federation of Women Bodybuilders," membership brochure, Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center. See also: Doris Barrilleaux, "What's It All About—SPA, AFWBB, IFBB," brochure, Steve Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center.
99. Barrilleaux continued publishing *SPA News* through July 1983 and ended it only when she was offered a chance to publish a "real" magazine by Dan Lurie. Interview with Barrilleaux by Todd, 12 August 2011. Copies of SPA news are available in the Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.
100. Doris Barrilleaux, *SPA News* 2, no. 12 (March, 1981).
101. "American Federation of Women Bodybuilders," membership brochure.
102. "AFWB News," *SPA News* 3, no. 1 (April 1981), 7.
103. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 September 2011.
104. Doris Barrilleaux, "From The Editor," *SPA News* 4, no.1 (April 1982), 14.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Carla Dunlap letter to Barrilleaux, 19 February 1981, Barrilleaux Collection, Stark Center.
108. Laura Combes and Bill Reynolds, *Winning Women's Bodybuilding* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1983), 13.
109. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 27 August 2011. According to Doris the men who attended were Wayne DeMillia and Oscar State.
110. This was also true for the early Ms. Olympia contests.
111. Anthropologist Alan Klein argues that bodybuilding's political economy in this era would have been comparable to the NFL Commissioner owning 80% of the teams and *Sports Illustrated*. Alan Klein, "Muscle Manor: The Use of Sport Metaphor and History in Sport Sociology," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 9, (1985): 6.
112. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, September 20, 2011.
113. Barrilleaux email to Harguess, 23 June 2011.
- 114 "Pertinent Information," *SPA News* 2, no. 12 (March 1981), 4.
115. Ibid.
116. Bill Dobbins, "Why No Lat Spread for Women"; see also: Doris Barrilleaux, "Mass vs. Class," *Shape*, February 1982, 62-66.
117. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 27 August 2011.
118. Ibid.; Doris Barrilleaux, *SPA News* 4 & 5, nos. 12/1 (March and April, 1983). Doris' last contest as a judge was the IFBB Women's World Championships in Australia in 1984.
119. Jan Todd and Terry Todd, "Reflections on the Parallel Federation to the Problem of Drug Use in Sport: The Cautionary Tale of Powerlifting," Thomas Murray, ed., *Performance Enhancing Technologies in Sport: Ethical, Conceptual and Scientific Issues* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009); see also: Jan Todd and Terry Todd, "Chaos Can Have Gentle Beginnings: the Early History of the Quest for Drug Testing in American Powerlifting: 1964-1984," *Iron Game History* 8, (3) (May-June 2004): 3-22.
120. Ibid.
121. Bob Wolff, "History of the NPC," *Muscle and Fitness*, September 1996, 78.
122. Barrilleaux interview with Harguess. See also, Barrilleaux undated letter to Wennerstrom, Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center.
123. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 27 August 2011.
124. Kennedy, "The First Lady."
125. Filmed in 1983, this dramatized documentary was the sequel to *Pumping Iron*, the iconic 1977 film that immortalized Arnold Schwarzenegger and men's bodybuilding. Filmmakers Charles Gaines and George Butler, with cooperation from the IFBB, followed women's bodybuilding contestants as they prepared and competed in the Caesar's World Cup, a new contest created expressly for the movie.
126. Doris Barrilleaux, *And I Did!* (DVD) (self-published, 2011) available at www.and-i-did.com.
127. *Body Talk*, Published by Dan Lurie and Doris Barrilleaux, Spring, 1984.
128. Barrilleaux interview with Todd, 20 August 2011.
129. Oscar State letter to Steve Wennerstrom, 22 December 1982, Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center. See also: Steve Wennerstrom letter to Oscar State, 13 December 1982, Steve Wennerstrom Collection, Stark Center, The University of Texas.

Editors Note:

To order copies of Doris Barrilleaux's DVD autobiography, *And I Did!*, send \$44.95 + \$5.00 shipping to Doris Barrilleaux, 9427 Oak St, Riverview, FL. or go to: www.AND-I-DID.com.