



The Making of a Natural Bodybuilder

by | Chad A. Martin

God created me, but my family formed me.

-CAM

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank God and his Son for the amazing gifts he has given me. I would like to thank my parents for teaching me about life, love, determination, my genetics, and God. My wife for being there for the grumpy times and the good times. For being my photographer, videographer, tanner, critic, and best friend. My older brothers and sister for helping form attitudes and opinions and learn what the meaning of competition means. My kids for letting their dad enjoy the thrill of competition, and brightening his long days when he comes home.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to my mother that passed away from a long battle with cancer this past May. She taught me many things in my lifetime, and blessed me with wonderful genetics. I miss her wisdom and soothing voice during the times that I needed to speak with her. I know she is in a better place now and we will soon be together again. I love you mom.

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Looking Back

If you would have told me when I was a kid that I would be one of the top natural bodybuilders in the world, I would have said you're crazy. Like many other kids I wanted to follow in my father's footsteps; I wanted to be a professional baseball player. My father grew up in the state of Florida, pretty much the other corner of the United States from where my mother and the rest of us grew up. He ended up playing baseball in college at Florida State University and later signed a baseball contract to play with the Angels and then the Giants. After many years in the minor leagues he ended up in a little dusty city in the south eastern part of Washington State where he met my mother. At the time this area was only known for the Hanford area which was critical in developing the technology for the nuclear bombs that ended World War II. The area was growing and had a small farm team that my dad played for and finished his career with, the Tri-City Braves. After retiring from baseball he decided to get a piece of land in Kennewick and began raising a family.

My mother was a long time resident of the tri-city area. Her father worked in the Hanford area putting food on the table for five kids. My mother was a middle child of three girls and two boys and a self-proclaimed tomboy. She would always tell me that she didn't like the girlie things; she always wanted to play sports and wrestle with the boys, especially her baby brother who ended up being 6'4 and an exceptional athlete in high school. Thank goodness for my mother's side of the family for their height. My grandfather was 6'1, my dad is only 5'4", so ending up six feet tall and tallest in my family was a blessing from God.

I don't remember my grandparents very much. My dad's family stayed in Florida and I only remember seeing them once when I was turning eleven and we made the family trip to

Disneyworld in Orlando. His mother was a short tough devout Christian woman that was the matriarch of the family. Neither my mother nor I ever met my father's dad. He died shortly after WWI due to complications they believed from the chemical weapons used during that time. My mother's parents were both from this area. I remember my grandfather being a tough old guy sitting in his chair yelling at a hyper kid to sit down, yes that hyper kid was me. I remember my grandmother always making us honey toast, and getting grapes and berries off the backyard vine and in some cases going to the little ice cream shop behind their house to get a cone. Why is it a lot of our memories especially the good ones revolve around food? Thought for later.

The year my parents bought their land and first house was the year my oldest brother was born. He would fall into the stereotypical older brother role beating the snot out of his younger siblings. Two years later my second brother was born but he had some difficulties from the beginning with health issues, so my mother always watched him very closely. The third child of the family was my sister and the only girl. She would be raised in a male dominated family of competitive athletes. As the saying goes we save the best for last. I was the caboose as my dad always called me, spoiled is more what my siblings called me, but now having four kids of my own, I know what it is like to look at your last and know there will be none after.

Growing Wide and Up

Growing up on a small farm in a rural part of town is an interesting experience. We didn't have a lot of animals, but no matter what they were it was work. I remember feeding the pigs, pulling their teeth. Chickens were messy and stinky. Goats were ornery and fun to

play with. Horses were fun when you could ride them and not get thrown off or into a fence, and cows eat and crap a lot. One thing my dad always said was we all had to pitch in, no matter how old you were. So if it was feeding or cleaning up after the dogs or when you were big enough, it was feeding the cows. Watching movies about farms they make lifting and throwing hay bales around look cool, but I will tell you from twenty years of experience is that you don't put it in your teeth and you are fully clothed unless you want torn up skin. Plus the hay bales in movies are probably straw or fake bales. A real alfalfa bale will weigh anywhere from 75 lbs. for two strings and over 100 lbs. for three strings. Now imagine every weekend getting a truckload of these and you never move them once. You have to load the truck, then unload the truck, and sometimes move them to the stack. Well, this is where it all began, and when you couldn't lift the bales, you would drag them. The amazing thing is every year they got lighter. I didn't know if we were buying the cheaper bales or if something was happening to my body. The true motion to lifting a bale is very similar to a clean and jerk. You bend at the knees grasp the strings pull straight up, using a knee if you have to and pushing up as high or as far as it needs to go to get to whoever is on top, usually was my dad. I think he had figured early on that being on top of the pile was a little easier, but also it was good for us. During the era he grew up lifting weights was frowned upon for athletes. It was always believed to make you inflexible and slow. But my dad used to tell me stories of when he made a weighted vest and put lead in it to increase his leg and calf strength for speed. He would wear it everywhere including on his bike. That is probably how he got such big calves. One spring training he told me they measured them at 18+ inches around. I thought growing up that every dad wore suspenders for their socks. His calves were so big that he would wear down the elastic on his socks. But it made him run like a deer, a trait that later helped his sons on every field of play. Grabbing

bales soon became clear to me a challenge, not only for grip strength but toughness of my hands. You always made sure you got the good pair of gloves, if not then you got the ones with holes in it and blister and cuts prevailed. So, basically being the youngest I got the crappy gloves but in the end it toughened up my hands for holding a bat.

Not all of my youth was work, besides being raised in a Christian home, riding on the church bus that my dad drove, and going to church every Sunday, every spring and summer was on a baseball field, and fall was on the football field. My father loves baseball, and it shows even until this day with his grandchildren. One thing everybody that knows my father knows he take baseball serious there is no goofing around, even at the tee ball level. Before I could even play I was always on the field either being the batboy or shagging balls for my older brother's teams. Taking my dad's work philosophy into baseball is that there is always something to be doing, something to improve on. Baseball is a sport for gifted athletes but also for those that are not gifted but work extremely hard. Baseball is the most non-discriminating sport in the world. You can be tall, short, fat, skinny, black, white, brown, it doesn't matter, if you are willing to put the work in, you can play. I think it was this philosophy that help begin the mold of what I am today. I played baseball for most of my life. I started at an early age and finally hung up my cleats around the age of twenty-five playing on a few state and NW championship teams from Little League through college and a little after.

High School

One thing that has always stayed constant through my years of sports has been good coaching but coaches that believed in weight training and it benefits. In the area that I grew up we were very fortunate to have a coach move from an Idaho school to take the head football

coaching position at our local high school. He began a strength training program that started in middle school during the summer. My older brothers went through it and so did I. It changed my life. That is when I began to fall in love with weight training and the feeling it gave me. I remember begging my mom to buy me muscle magazines at the local grocery store, and I would read that thing cover to cover many times. This is about the time I went and attended my first bodybuilding show. I think I was 15, then it was called the Mr. Tri-Cities, it was a local show, but at the time one of the best in the area, Lou Ferrigno showed up one year to guest pose. Everyone looked so big, larger than life; I wanted that to be me. It helps when you are just starting out at something that you are already fairly good at it. Growing up on the farm, I had already built a strong base moving hay bales, so picking up weights was just a cleaner way of moving weight around. Quickly I found out just how strong and fast I was. When I was a freshman, I was as strong as some of the seniors. My second oldest brother was a senior at this time and I would train with him in the main gym or at home and would out lift many of the older football players. I remember being asked to go up on the Varsity Football field for practice in the summer as a freshman. I was the only one, everybody else were juniors and seniors. I remember some of the players were giving me a hard time about why I was up here and I shouldn't be here, but I remember my brother sticking up for me and telling them that coach wanted me here. When I was in middle school, I was just average size and speed, but by my freshman year, I was the fastest on the team. One thing my brothers and I were known for was our speed. We all ran 40s in the mid 4.5s. For the 80s these were good times for a bunch of white boys. The other attribute we had were minimum 30+ inch vertical jumps. I think we were fortunate in inheriting great athletic genetic gifts. We all had big calves, legs and of course the bubble butt. Trouble buying jeans started in high school. I remember ripping many

pairs of 501s especially one time playing hacky sack during lunch. I had to run to my gym locker and get my lifting shorts to wear for the rest of the day that was my sophomore year of high school. That's when I started wearing belts because I had to buy 2 or 3 size larger pants to fit my leg and glutes, but my waist was always small. I graduated high school at the age of 17 standing 5' 10", 195 lbs. running a 4.55 forty and a vertical jump of 30".

College Life

I had baseball and football offers for college but I had always wanted to play college baseball like my dad. I chose to play for a former baseball and football coach that was from our area that was now the head coach at a junior college on the other side of the state. After playing against him in a summer legion ball tournament, I spoke with him and signed my intent that summer to play for him my freshman year. Coach Farrington had lived in our area for many years and was known for being a good and demanding coach. He and my father started the legion program in our area and was known for having players do lunges with weights out to the practice field. In college, we trained all the time but offseason training took place at 5am in the morning. Workouts were tough but I loved it because it challenged me even more than high school. By my sophomore year, I was 5'11 weighing 230lbs running a 4.55 forty, 6.4 sixty, vertical jump 34", and had set the school record with 105 double jumps in a row. We did state and national testing all the time for strength feats, so we could see where we stood with Division I schools. My coach at the time was in his 40s, studying kinesiology, but very athletic and strong. I remember doing bench presses at least once a week with him and our catcher (6'3, 260lbs) finishing workouts with at least 400+lbs. I learned a lot about baseball in those two years, accomplishing a state and NW baseball title, and runner up my second year, but

more importantly my training has reached a new level of intensity.

The next two years I ended up moving to Texas and Spokane for baseball. Texas was a lot of fun, but our coach was not a believer in weight training but more into running. He was a former minor league pitcher so he was a big believer in lungs and legs. I had to join a local club (meat market) called The Body Shop to get any lifting in, we weren't allowed in the football weight room, so training was hard but I would always get it in. We ran everywhere across campus and had to be back by a certain time. Many times we took detours where the ladies were sunbathing, so at least the scenery was nice. In Texas, it was always hot and humid, so my weight dropped down to 215lbs, but my speed increased. That year (1992), I got an invite to go to Millington, TN for the Olympic Baseball Tryouts. Those four days were an awesome experience for me. My luggage was lost on the 1st day, so I had to borrow clothes and equipment from other players, luckily I found a guy that was my size, and the organization gave me a pair of the official USA pants that I still have today. I had a good weekend, I ran the 2nd fastest time (6.2, 60) and hit steadily over the weekend with 2 HR working my way up to field A (field for last cuts). That weekend I hung out with two guys, the one that lent me clothes I later found out was the NCAA college player of the year from Maryland, and the other was this skinny kid wearing a Georgia Tech hat that later made the U.S. team, named Nomar Garciaparra. I wanted to go back to Texas for my senior year but the coach at the time told me I probably wouldn't start my senior year, even after having a pretty good junior year. I decided to go back home and wanted to play for Bobo Brayton. He was a W.S.U. legend that got a hold of me that summer and we talked about playing for my last year, but this is when I found out that my previous coach wouldn't release me from Texas State because they were both Division I schools, so I would either have to sit out 1 year or transfer to a NAIA school. Somehow

Whitworth, a private NAIA school had gotten a hold of me in Spokane, and we talked about what offers were still available. I didn't want to sit out an entire year so I decided to finish my college ball at Whitworth. I was selected in the Top 100 Players to watch in the NAIA that year, I think largely due to playing Division 1 the year before and attending the Olympic tryouts. I had a few teams interested in me for MLB, but most of them didn't follow through with the offers they promised. Having a good year I was stuck, I hit the tryout circuit for a while and had more leads but my future started to slap me in the face. I decided since I had all this schooling to do something with it and finish my education.

Degrees

When I started college I was exactly sure what I wanted to do. Baseball was priority number one, but my dad was the 1st and only one to graduate from college in his family and I wanted to be the 1st in mine to do so also. I chose a liberal arts degree to fulfill my credits for an AA, graduating with honors, but I had a love for technology, it fascinated me. In middle school we had two Apple II's; a few of us would mess around with them at lunch. Then in high school I took a typing class and computer programming, BASIC. I blew through the 1st class easily and wanted to learn more but my teacher had nothing more to teach me since at the time it was so new to everyone, so he allowed me to be a teacher aide, teach the 1st year kids, and work on special projects for other teachers. His room had the only scanner, so I help publish a book on football techniques for one of the coaches; it was such an empowering feeling to be needed at that age. So when I could in college I took as many computer classes that they would allow, PASCAL I and II, Fortran, etc. The only problem is that there weren't a lot of computer jobs to find and I wasn't the type of person to be behind a computer all day

long. Adding more computer, math, and psychology classes from Texas and Whitworth, I ran into an old principal, yes that did whip my butt, did I mention I was a hyper child. Mr. Farris spoke to me one day after church and said there is a large need for men in elementary education. He said it is dominated by women with over 75% and the boys especially need a male role model at that age. That hit home with me and I started the education certificate process at Eastern Washington University. I remember sitting in a meeting with my guidance counselor and she told me I had already enough credits to graduate with but not in the right areas, so I would need to pick a subject or emphasis to go with my teacher's certification. It would most likely take me another year and a half to two years. Not playing baseball, I found myself with time on my hands and being the active person just lifting weights wasn't good enough. I joined a few intramural teams playing basketball and flag football, wanting to stay in shape for more baseball tryouts next summer, but this is when I found something that not only had a physical transformation for me but a mental one. At this time my second oldest brother had gotten married and moved to Spokane, so we tried to spend as much time together as his wife would allow. We decided to take a Gojo-Ru karate class together at the college. Our Sensei was an original student of a Master that came directly from Okinawa, he had been living and teaching in Spokane for over 20 years and was very strict and stern to the standards. Quickly, I knew this was the place for me, the challenges were great but I was able adapt and learn at a rapid pace. Not only did I take the day class at school, I signed up for the night classes at his dojo. I was training 5-6 times a week, and never realized how sore you could get from body weight exercises. We would perform a lot of plyometric exercises that would push me harder than I had ever been pushed. I remember one night we were doing standing lunges as a group. By the time we were done at a 1000 lunges, only 3 of us were standing, My Sensei (2nd

degree black belt), a 3rd degree brown belt, and myself, a lowly white belt. I couldn't walk for 3 days I was so sore. I know people gave me strange looks at school. I remember another night of doing bunny hops the length of the dojo, down and back was one, same group of 3 were last to finish at 70 down and back, or 140 one way. My sensei soon realized that physically I could match anyone in the class, but my katas needed work, so he pushed me hard to improve on my form. Later, this would be my base for developing my posing on stage. I received my green belt in less than 1 year, which he told me later, was the fastest he had ever promoted anyone. My older brother later received his green belt after 3 years and we started at the same time. I earned my BA and teachers' certificate with honors and decided to move back home and start figuring out life. I took some time away from school going to a few more baseball tryouts and working construction in the meantime. I got a few invites to spring training with a local independent league baseball team that was part of the WBL. Short story is I was released and offered a contract from Charlie Kerfeld (former Astros knuckle baller) to play in a small town near Seattle. This was a turning point in my life. Do I hold on to a dream or move on and grow up. I chose to move on. It was hard for me, but I think it was harder for my dad. I went back to teaching, and at this time I had met my future wife. I began substituting in the local school district in hopes of getting a job, for 2 years I bounced around schools feeling out different grades and subjects, but I thought I always wanted to teach the 4th grade. I decided to start my Master's Degree through a new satellite program from Gonzaga University. I have always said to date that this had to be the hardest two years of my life, and if I could get through this I could get through anything. About a month after I started my Masters I was asked to sub at the local juvenile jail. Like most people I never knew they had a school there. After going in the first day it went well, and they asked me if I would ever come back, I said sure. A few weeks

later I got a call and when a teacher decided to early retire for mental medical reasons they offered me a job to be the P.E. teacher. At the time there was no computer program, but I found some old macs lying around and started one my first year. Now, during this time of studying, teaching, my wife was a full-time nurse at the local hospital and was already pregnant with our 1st child that was due in October. After our beautiful baby girl was born, we then decided we needed a bigger place. We moved into a manufactured home and by the end of finishing my Master Degree we had our 2nd child, a baby boy. During this time I kept my lifting schedule up in between night classes, a full work day, and getting no sleep. One year into it we got a new owner at Universe Gym, the oldest gym in town. He and a good friend of mine who became a mentor for me decided to talk me into my first bodybuilding show. The same one I watched when I was a teenager, but with a different name and drug testing. I was not sure at the time, but he insisted he would take care of all my expenses if I represented the gym. I was missing something during this time, I no longer had baseball or martial arts, so I looked at it as a new challenge, and so I said yes. The contest would be 2 months after I graduated with Honors from Gonzaga and the birth of my 1st son, so now I really had to step up my training and learn a lot in a short amount of time.

The beginning of a new hobby

Competing in my 1st show I was extremely nervous, and didn't know what to expect. I remember the night before being dehydrated and rubbing ice on my lips to compensate for chapped lips. Quickly, I learned that the last week before a bodybuilding show is one of the most challenging tasks you can endure. It pushes you mentally and physically outside of your normal comfort zones. It's no wonder we become addicted to food when it controls the mood

we are in 90% of the time. Taking in carbs or simple sugars definitely has an endorphin raising experience. It's amazing, the emotional rollercoaster you go through during this process. First, it's the anxiety and nervousness of how you will perform on stage, the lack of sleep the night before, feeling weak and subdued. The adrenalin rush as you prepare to go on stage and the elation of getting off, and that is just the prejudging. After the morning sinks in, it starts all over for the night show again. I firmly believe that the competitors that can control their emotions the best throughout the day tend to win most often. Learning to control the highs and lows can be crucial to your state of mind on or off stage. I ended up winning the heavyweight division but losing the overall to a lightweight that day. I remember being upset like most contestants and feeling robbed, because I had so much more mass and size than he did, but in doing so I learned a valuable lesson. I had come in around 207lbs, but was holding a little extra fat and water on my thighs. This was the beginning of me learning to examine every aspect of my physique, including conditioning. After a show it is such an amazing feeling, especially if you win. You are so excited about going to pig out and eat whatever you desire. I remember someone telling me once that if you have every considered doing a show to do it, and you will know immediately after if you love it or hate it, and I absolutely fell in love. I had been a team player my whole life and had never really experienced an individual sport. Bodybuilding is an subjective sport, but it is won on or lost by you and you only. Are you making the sacrifices necessary to win? Are you getting up early in the morning, passing on going out with friends or family, giving up birthday cakes and ice cream, or the high calorie meal after church? One thing this sport does is test your will power on a daily basis. Should I go out to lunch with cohorts, should I skip the gym today and rest? It's a constant battle and struggle, but the reward is worth it.

I was so excited after my first show I couldn't wait to do another. The bug had gotten a hold of me. I found out there was an NPC show in Portland, OR, called the NW Natural, which is only 3 hours away, so I decided to enter and finish the year out on a good note. The show was put on by a current NPC competitor that stands 5'8, 265 (300+ offseason) and has 23+ inch arms. I was surprised a guy like this put on a natural show, but two competitors were tested, one was me. I won the heavyweight class, but I also lost the overall again, but was feeling good and on a roll. There were no other natural shows around for the remaining of the year so I decided to take what I learned and get ready for the new millennium.

The Millennium and the new ME

It was the year 2000 and not all of the computers crashed. What's funny is I remember reading they had been hiring for old programmers that were familiar with FORTRAN, because no one had been learning it; the new language was C+. I considered taking one of these positions but was happy in my current career with hopes of an emerging fitness career also. My goals for 2000 were to win my first overall title, and continue winning in the heavyweight division. Also, I planned on doing four shows this year to get my name out there. The best way to get noticed is to win, people support winners. I started the competition year with the NW natural show this year in Portland again repeating my win in the heavyweight division, but again losing the overall to a lightweight who was more cut than I was. I got to meet Jay Cutler this year; he was the guest poser and handed out trophies to the winners. He was a new star to the IFBB, and as we know now current 3X Mr. Olympia champion. I was shocked how short he is at 5' 8". This was the beginning of my realization that almost all the top IFBB bodybuilders are less than 5'10". We see so many of them in magazines it's hard to get an idea of just how

tall they are. They look larger than life, but in actuality after they lose most of their muscle after years of abuse, there not that big. Also, at this show I was approached with my 1st opportunity for a supplement sponsor. A local owner of Max Muscle stores asked if I wanted to sign a contract with him to do some ads for supplements. I told him I wanted to think about it and I remembered a local store opening up where I lived so I wanted to talk with them first, but it opened the door. I went back home after my 3rd win and spoke with the local owner about a similar deal, he agreed. We started off with some small ads in the local paper, and now I didn't have to pay for clothes and protein shakes.

For the NW Natural, I came in at 211lbs, which was the largest and still the largest I have ever weighed for a show. I knew I was too smooth and if I would have been leaner I would have won, no doubt in my mind. One of the hardest things for a bodybuilder to do is realize that as you are dropping the fat, losing strength, but maintaining your muscle you look better. I remember fans, family, and judges telling me that I look bigger when I'm leaner. So, I finally decided to listen, and tried to come in around 202-205lbs. A few weeks later was the West Coast Natural, this was my very 1st show the previous year in my hometown that I had lost the overall. I was determined not to let the gym, family or myself down this year and the Overall trophy was coming home with me. I came in at 207.5 lbs and won both the heavyweight class and the overall. It is a great feeling to take 1st in your class but a much better feeling to beat everybody that is why overall titles are tricky. Class wins are decided after the morning, but to win an overall you have to make sure you don't screw up in between the prejudging and the evening show. This year I began having my wife take as many pictures of my class in the morning but also the other classes. Nine times out of ten I could pick the winners of each class including my own. When I got my first digital camera I would study the pictures not only to see

my weak spots but the other competitors. If I felt I looked flat, I would carb up a little and add water in between shows. If I thought I looked smooth I would put on layers of clothes to sweat it out anyway I could. There have been times I have gone to the tanning booth in between shows, boiled water with heat lamps in the hotel bathroom to make my own sauna. In Greece, they had a sauna at the hotel. I remember sitting in that thing fully clothed over at 120 degrees, and just recently had cranked the hotel room over 90 degrees and slept in two layers of clothes and sweat. Being a natural bodybuilder you can't use any drugs or diuretics to get rid of your water so you have to find more natural means.

A few weeks later I entered my 3rd show in Spokane, the NPC Inland Pacific Natural at the famous Met Theater. This was a beautiful venue and the pump up room was in the boiler room dungeon about 2 flights under the stage. I pumped up for an hour that night which allowed me to sweat out a lot of the subcutaneous water. I came in around 202lbs and looked great taking the heavyweight and overall title, but I didn't steal the show. The light heavy weight competitor was a handicap bodybuilder that had suffered injuries from a motorcycle accident. He used a special device kind of like a large doll stand but made of metal on stage to help him pose. It was amazing to watch him hit his poses while trying to show no struggle. Rick Heintz was an inspiration to me that day and showed me what we need to do with our God-given talents. Rick was a devout Christian and was always willing to share his testimony anytime. He was the true winner of that show. One week later, I was planning to do the NPC Ironman Natural in Seattle. This would be my largest show to date with over 130 competitors. I had good hopes for the show, and came in at a good weight of 202lbs. I was lighter due to doing the show the weekend before, but that is the scheduling of shows. You will hear different competitors talk about doing mock or little shows a week out of a big show, because it

helps bring in cuts. I have seen this work and not work so well, it depends on the competitor and how well they control their diet and water. At this show I would suffer my first loss, 2nd place, and for those that know me, 2nd place is considered 1st loser, but I started to realize that the drug testing for the NPC might not be very conclusive or effective.

Five days after this show I had scheduled a hernia operation I had found out about in June. The doctor wanted me to have it in July, but I told him I had been training all year for these four shows. He advised to get it done now, but I asked him would it kill me, he said probably not, so I said, see you in November. I knew I could use this time to rest and heal properly, but the six weeks off was extremely hard for someone so active. My weight blew up to 250lbs, so I knew I had my work cut out for me to get ready for the next year.

Introduction to Anabolic Steroids

Most of the time I am an idealist and want to believe that everyone plays on the same field, but I am also a realist and you learn to pick out the guys who are using from certain dead giveaways. Since around the middle of my high school years is when it started. Being that I was stronger than most of the older athletes including the majority in my own class, the rumors started that I was using some sort of steroids. At first it didn't bother me, because I barely knew what they were. I had been reading a lot of muscle magazines at this time, but most didn't talk about them, and there was no internet or Google to go look up what d-bol or test was, so I ignored it. In all honesty there never really was a time in my life that I ever wanted to use any. I would save up my money and buy muscle shakes or vitamins from GNC, but to buy steroids I wouldn't know the first thing about it or where to go, I was quite naïve as a kid. My eyes started to open when I read an article in Sports Illustrated about a college football player

named Tommy Chaikin. He talked about how his life spun out of control and he was arrested, pulling guns on pizza delivery boys, and nearly killing people because the steroids took over his mind and body. This sunk deep in my psyche and convinced me that I never wanted to go down that path. Now, at this point in my life I was around 15-16 yrs old and my hormones were going crazy. I was training everywhere and at any time that I could. Arnold, Stallone, and Van Damme were the big stars and of course that is when muscles on screen became popular. If I wasn't training at the schools weight room or the local gym, then called Man's World, downtown, I was in my basement using an old KMART cement weight set my dad had bought my older brother, or using my make shift pull-up bar that hung between our stairs banister. I remember replaying scenes like Rocky training in the snow, or Arnold pushing the wood mechanism in Conan, or Van Damme training with his surrogate Japanese father over and over in my mind as I lifted whatever I could. They truly were all an inspiration. Luckily I was older and more mature after finding out some of them had been using the juice or other drugs for years. I think it would have been harder to deal with as a youth, so I'm happy for that. It's hard to watch our heroes fall. It's one of those things, everybody wanted to be Arnold and for a time I did too, or in the natural world they would say I wanted to be the natural version of Arnold. After a little growing up I realized that I didn't want to be like anyone else, I wanted to be the best version of me with what God-given attributes I have. It's like I told my son, we all have favorite players, but I have never bought or worn a jersey with someone else's' name on it. I made a covenant to myself that the only jersey I would wear is one that I earned with my name on it or I wouldn't wear one.

I think at one point during my teenage years my dad even thought I was using something, because out of nowhere one day at church a friend of his that was a former pro or

semi-pro football player came up to me and confessed he had used and the problems and side-effects he had from his use. It was awkward at the time, but I'm glad he did it because to this day it is a conversation I never forgot and think of every time I see him at church. That is the thing about being a role model; you never realize that a conversation you will most likely forget might have a huge impact on someone else.

Turning 16, I was a junior in high school and had really started to grow. I was the fastest kid among my age and 3rd on the varsity football team. I was young for my class, so I had to take summer school to get my driver's license, but this was a blessing in disguise. We had to ride our 10-speeds to class every day that was at the rival high school across town. This really developed my legs and especially my calves. Previously, I had stated about my father's calves being measured around 18+'' one spring training, this is where mine really started to take shape, the largest mine were ever measured was 17.5'', but on someone 6' compared to 5'4'' it looks like about a 3'' difference, but I have won a few too close to call shows from standing rear calve raises. Still to this day, I have people stop me in the gym and ask how I got my calves that big, and I tell them thank God for genetics and a lot of bicycling. I can load 14+ plates on a leg press machine and it seems like nothing for my calves. On standing machine raises I have put 6 plates on the handles with the weight stack for one legged raises. It is crazy how strong they are. That is one body part I hope to pass to my children.

Going Au Natural

After my 1st loss in the heavyweight division, I started to question the legitimacy of the NPC Natural shows. I was a little frustrated because seeing competitors who are obviously using (certain muscle groups overly developed, gynecomastia or bitch tits, severe acne, etc.)

some performance enhancers and taking a few of the lie detector tests myself I knew that this wasn't 100% foolproof. Not being an idiot, I know nothing is, look at the Olympics, but I knew there had to be better organizations out there, so I began to search, it was time to move on to bigger and better things. I wanted to compete on the national and world level. I started scouring magazines and searching the internet for the best natural organization. A few of the promoters from local and regional shows were also getting tired of the NPC's hypocrisy, so they decided to take a year off and form their own organization which was the WFNA (World Federation of Natural Athletes). After much searching I found the ABA/INBA and tried to quickly learn how to enter a show and where the closest one was.

2001

In 2001, there were no shows in the NW and I had to enter a qualifier before entering the Team USA which was the qualifier for the Natural Olympia (largest drug-tested show in the world). The closest show I could find was the Natural Hollywood in L.A., so I booked a ticket and entered my first show. Overall, there wasn't much difference from the NPC shows right off the bat, but I did end up winning the tall or heavyweight division, but lost the overall to a last minute entry that took about an hour to finish his polygraph. The rest of the competitors averaged about 10-15 minutes. It was fishy, especially after seeing the size of this guy. He had cannon balls for shoulders. Well, I wasn't too frustrated, but I never saw him in a natural show again, but some NPC shows later and many photos in M&F and Flex, so I know my instinct was right on. Next, I entered the Team USA in Las Vegas and was excited by the level of competition. This definitely was a step up from NW shows. I placed 1st in the Tall/HW division and lost my 1st USA overall to the light heavy or medium tall competitor, but this started my

streak for class wins. Competing in the overall made me realize that I had to work even harder. My fellow competitors looked great so I knew I had to step up my training to get ready for my first shot at the Natural Olympia title in two months in Hawaii. Returning home late Monday September 10, 2001, I was so excited to tell everyone how I had done. It was amazing going to Vegas and competing against the best natural bodybuilders in the USA and represent the Team at the Natural Olympia. The next morning I will never forget. The phone rang early and it was my mother, she told me to turn on the television. As I sat at the end of my bed, waking my wife up, and staring at the television, not knowing what I was looking at, I could hear the fear in my mom's voice knowing that we were safe at home, but still scared that it could have been us on one of those planes. I reminded her we are ok, but I remember sitting staring at the TV for the next few weeks in a fog wondering what the heck just happened. Being a believer, I have always believed since the earth was created that there has been good and evil in this world and for someone or group to kill thousands of innocent people is truly evil. Even though I had a show coming up, I still trained hard, but it was hard keeping focus on such a local thing that I cared about when the nation was in such turmoil. I will say that even though this was a trying time for America, it was one of the best. Everywhere you went everyone was so nice and cordial. People were friendly again; it was like going to church at the mall, store, gym, work, etc. It really did unite us, but coming up on the 10 year anniversary it's sad that it didn't last long and many have forgotten that awful day.

My wife and I were excited, I had never been to Hawaii and this began our exploration of new places. We never really had a honeymoon after we got married, so in a way this was kind of like one for us. At the time Heidi was 8 months pregnant with our 3rd child, so her doctor didn't want her to fly, but she didn't want to miss this trip, and neither did I. She had

been there since day 1 helping me with photography, videography, shaving, tanning application, and overall travel companion. I don't know what I would have done without her help all these years; she is a trooper to put up with me. We had an amazing time watching sunsets and soaking in the culture, I just wish it could have lasted longer. I had scheduled a photo shoot with a guy out of L.A. for a new magazine, but the magazine didn't stay in publication long. Although, the pictures were used later in another ad, it was a good experience for later shoots and not a waste of a day. The show was grueling; at this time it was the toughest to date. There were around 250 competitors from 30+ different countries; I think they had the same idea as us, a business vacation. Being a new teacher I didn't have a lot of extra money for this trip and my sponsors could only help out a little. I decided to hold a raffle using sponsors as the prizes and selling raffle tickets for a dollar a piece. It worked out well. I was able to raise a decent amount of money that paid for most of the trip. In the beginning, it was hard getting to shows, especially ones so far away, but I was just as determined in getting there as I was in my training. The Natural Olympia that year ended up being a 2 day event (only time in its history). The pre-judging was held on Friday and the Evening show on Saturday. This sounds cool, but is extremely difficult for a bodybuilder to adjust his water, food and sodium over a 2 day period. In addition, the emotional roller coaster due to lack of excitement finishing day 1 then having to do it all again on day 2 is tough. Even so, the show was great, I took 1st (Gold Medal) in the Tall/Heavy but lost the overall title to now hall of famer Ron Williams. This began another revelation for me. In between shows we were laying out on the deck soaking in the sun, and I sat down next to Ron. We began to talk about bodybuilding, our faith, and just life in general. I quickly realized one of the major differences I found between competing in the natural world as compared to the other. Even though you may lose, the winner may be or soon

be your friend. Competing over 10+ years in natural bodybuilding I have built up a great camaraderie with my fellow competitors, most I have beaten but some I have lost to. I enjoy seeing them every year, almost looking forward to it because we share this bond of training, sacrifices, and a goal to convince the world that you can build a great healthy physique without using drugs. I have always believed that I am ambassador for my faith as well as for this sport and young kids, athletes, and bodybuilders that are watching my every step. After leaving Hawaii, I had planned on being finished for the year and getting ready for next year, but the Natural Universe was a week later in L.A. at the same venue as the Hollywood was. I decided since I was already in shape, I might as well do it. The show itself was good, but the result wasn't. I ended up 2nd place to a local guy that showed up, and was a little disappointed. I did end up doing a small photo shoot with a photographer which later became the main shots used for full page color ads for Max Muscle that ran national in their Max Fitness magazines. Soon after I received a call from the President of Max Muscle and got my first corporate sponsorship. I was on cloud nine, in only my second year I was with a well known supplement company with the likes of some of the biggest names in bodybuilding and fitness side by side in their magazines. Riding off of my disappointment from losing, but my success in advertising, I was even more determined to be better in 2002, and win my 1st overall title on the national and world level.

2002

In 2002, I repeated at the West Coast Natural with a 1st and Overall Title, which was now under the WFNA, and used it as a prep show for my second year of competing with the ABA/INBA. This was one of my favorite shows ever. Due to how the country was reeling from

9/11, someone had appropriated the largest flag I have ever seen as the backdrop curtain, it was awesome. Some of my favorite pictures were taken with that in it. Also, this was the first show that I received a sword for the overall prize. When you begin bodybuilding, one of the first prizes you want to win is a life size sword, like the ones Arnold swung around in the Conan movies; it still hangs on my wall to this day. About a week after this show I got a call from Max Muscle and they decided not to run my ads anymore and no longer needed my services. I can't say that I was highly disappointed, and wonder why all of the sudden this happened, but I did what I always do and prayed about it. Within a week, one of my older brother's best friends asked me to attend an Advocare meeting at the local library. A strength and conditioning coach from Texas A&M was speaking and after the meeting he told me about an endorsement program they had for professional athletes, and gave me the person to contact. Later that week, I spoke with the director of endorsers and explained who I was and what I do. At the time there were no bodybuilders or fitness endorsers with the company. There were a few well-known football (Trent Dilfer, Steve McNair), baseball (Ryan Franklin, Junior Spivey) and basketball players. He told me that they wanted to stay away from bodybuilding because of stigma it has with performance enhancing substances, and I understood. I decided to give him my testimony as a Christian and explained to him how the drug-testing works in the organizations that I compete in. I told him my plans were to be an ambassador for the sport of natural bodybuilding not just for now and a sponsorship, but for many years to come. I wanted to change the way people looked at bodybuilding and fitness and not automatically assume everyone is using something that has a tremendous physique. They decided to take a chance on me and 9 years later I am still with the company. Also, in 2002, they signed a new QB; his name is Drew Brees, which later we appeared together on an ad for their Performance Elite

line, and he became the national spokesperson.

All charged up now with a new sponsor and products flowing through my body, I felt confident going into the USA this year. This would be my year to get my 1st overall USA title. I was in great shape and won the Tall/HW class. I remember posing to the 9/11 song that Marc Anthony sang as a reminder of what happened a year ago. It still gives me chills when I hear George Bush's voice at the start of that song. For those that know me I am very picky about the songs I choose. I have mixed my own songs for years on my computer. This was the 1st time I didn't use a Christian band for my posing routine. For years, I have used Kirk Franklin, Pillar, Kutless, and Toby Mac. I ended up losing the overall by one lousy point to the short competitor again. This is when I started to realize that as the taller competitor I had to present my physique differently because the short competitor looks bigger. I went back to reading and watching pumping iron and Arnold's thoughts on posing against Franco Columbo. It was very interesting how he realized that no matter what certain poses that Franco hit, Arnold couldn't hit them the same way and he had to change how he presented himself and focus on the strengths of being a tall bodybuilder. I think that is why you don't see any tall bodybuilders left in the IFBB. There are a few like Markus Ruhl or Gunter Schlierkamp, but they typically don't place very high. Gunter, who I have met a few times is an extremely personable person, has a great physique but at 6'1 standing next to a group of 5' 8 competitors makes it difficult for comparisons.

Taking what I learned from the USA I was ready for my 2nd shot at the Natural Olympia title in Phoenix, AZ. I hadn't been to Arizona since my years of spring training in the early 90s. I remember playing against the Mariners rookie and AAA team in 90 degree heat in March. I knew that my toughest competition would be the current champion Ron Williams. He is the

short competitor and hasn't been beat in a few years. This would also be my 1st pro show. I decided to compete in both the open and pro division. The difference between the shows is that in the open you have to take 1st in your class to advance to the Overall title, whereas the pro division is everybody from short to tall, light to heavy weight are judged from the beginning and the top 3 are picked. Depending on the organization, money is awarded to pros usually for the top 3, but this year only 1st place won money. I ended up winning the Gold Medal in the Tall\HW class but lost the overall title to Ron in the open. Facing each other in the Pro division I had already knew I had probably lost due to the results from the open overall. Only a few times in the history of the ABA/INBA have they let competitors compete in both divisions. Typically once you win money as a Pro you cannot compete as an amateur anymore in the open. Since Ron and I knew how the outcome was going to go we decided to have fun and put on a show for the evening crowd, hitting numerous poses more like a mix pair than competitor. It was one of the most fun pose downs I have had in all my shows, and more proof that the camaraderie for this sport is amazing. I hate to lose, but losing to a fellow competitor that you are friends with takes the sting off a little. I was happy because I had taken 2nd place in the pro division at the largest Natural show in the world and had beat one of the pro competitors I had placed behind the year before, so progress was being made. I chose to finish the year with that show, and not participate at the Natural Universe, funds were tight and between the USA and Natural Olympia the Universe is the 3rd largest show, and not as exciting.

2003

I decided this year not to participate in the local show and just focus on the USA and a new Pro show in the NW to allow someone else the chance to win. The WFNA had been

growing with a few more shows and decided this year to have their 1st professional show. If any competitor from a previous WFNA show wanted to compete they were eligible, the show would take place in Seattle in November and would replace the Natural Olympia for me this year. I really wanted to go to the Natural Olympia because it was in Australia, but I could never get off the days needed for that trip. Again coming off the previous year I was very confident about this being my year to win my 1st overall USA title. When I showed up in Vegas, there was a new competitor in the tall class. He came in at 6'2 225lbs. and shredded. I was impressed by his size and conditioning, and a little skeptical, but everyone had to test. His testing took a while and from what I understand is that you can have a positive, negative, or inconclusive, and from what I heard later his test was inconclusive, similar to the competitor I met at my 1st ABA show in Hollywood. I ended up taking 2nd in this show, but would later get my 1st place back, more later. This began the ugliness of the sport, and my misfortune of losing out on an overall I know I could have won, but didn't get the chance to compete for.

I chose to take a break from the ABA/INBA until next year and stayed in the NW for the Supernatural Pro. This was going to be the inaugural Pro event for the WFNA that would hopeful jumpstart the organization into the natural bodybuilding world. At first it started out with the right intentions, but plummeted after this natural pro show that went sideways from the get go. After already paying hundreds of dollars to compete they slapped the competitors in the face and made us stay backstage or buy a ticket to go watch our own show, at \$25 a ticket, this wasn't cool at all. Then for myself, I ended up taking 4th place by a fraction of a point from 2nd place, which was ridiculous due to beating a few of the contestants previously. When I got the scoring sheets a few days later, I noticed that during one of the scoring rounds a judge had given me a score of an 11 out of 11 competitors. My worst score other than that was a 4,

and a majority of 1s and 2s, so how could I get an 11. Well studying the score sheet the competitor next to me had all 10s and 11s except for that round he had a 4. Now, they throw out one high and low, but it didn't matter, it already thrown off my total score which dropped me 2 places, from 2nd to 4th. In addition, they scored the posing round, so what basically happened was whoever had the best props, got the higher score. That is why I have always been against scoring posing. Posing should be for the fans in the evening show; it takes the stress off the competitors and lets them have a little fun. I asked them what they could do to fix the scoring issue and they told me nothing. I explained that if this is how they were going to run their organization I didn't want to be a part of it, and to keep the money that I had won for 4th place. They ended up folding after the next year. This was a good lesson that as a promoter of a show if you don't take care of your stars then they won't take care of you. I'm not saying this as I am the star, but people pay to come see the best, not some guy that just walked off the street. A few years before, I had an issue with a promoter over a money issue with travel and their scheduling of a show that cost me airline fees over switching of a flight, and the promoter later waived entry fees for me that covered the amount. Doing this, he showed that I was an important part of the organization, because he didn't have to do it.

2004

After two disappointing shows in 2003, I sulked a while during the holidays but then picked myself up and was determined to work as hard as ever. In early spring I was approached by an artist named Pete Geraghty out of New York to do a photo shoot and some artwork. Photo shoots were coming more and more but the artwork was amazing and something new and was later published in MuscleMag and Muscle & Fitness alongside an outstanding Arnold

piece. I was still unwavering in my goal to win my 1st overall USA and Natural Olympia title. I wanted to try and come in a little more shredded for my shows and decided to change my training a little. I picked up a Bowflex from an ad in the local classified and started training two times a day. I would go to the gym for an hour and a half then come home and spend another 30-40 minutes on the same muscle groups, then finish with 30-40 minutes of cardio. I started this routine 6-8 months out from the USA, and it paid off big time. I won the Tall/Heavy class and my 1st Overall USA title. It was an amazing feeling after all of these years of trying. Now I wanted to take that momentum into the Natural Olympia in Vegas. After the show at the USA I was approached by a couple out of Utah who owned a videographer company and wanted to make a documentary similar to Pumping Iron I and II. It was going to be called Pumping Iron III, but was changed to Pumping Up: The Natural Way due to copyright violations. The couple picked out the top 8 competitors for 2004 and I was one due to winning the USA. It was really exciting going through this process. The couple filmed 100+ hours of each competitor at their home towns training, working, competitions, and of course when we came together at the Natural Olympia. All of us were extremely hopeful that this would be as big as the original Pumping Iron and what it did for the sport of bodybuilding we wanted it to do the same for natural bodybuilding. The only problem is that there was one major flaw.

This year also began a new chapter for the ABA/INBA; since the organization was growing I believe they started to realize that drug testing was going to have to be better. Polygraph can be effective, but has to be backed up by a more objective test, such as blood, urine, or hair. I respect them for that decision, because this was the sole reason I and many others were fed up with the NPC, Musclemania, and other organization that claimed to be natural but never seemed to catch competitors or unbelievably they had a 100% pass rate.

Getting to Vegas, I thought this was my year. Feeling invincible coming off the USA and unknown possibilities with the documentary, I couldn't wait to get on stage. We had gotten down there a few days early because the videographers' wanted to shoot some shots of us together at the local Gold's Gym working out, etc. This experience was fun because the group bonded well and really stepped up the level of competition for the organization bringing in past champions and rising stars for this show. After the morning show, I felt confident I had won my class against the two smaller Australian competitors, but the one thing about bodybuilding is that it is a subjective sport and no matter how good you are if there is any type of bias in a judge's eye, you don't have a chance. The previous year in Australia, the USA team had cleaned house with the medal count and there was quite a bit of rumbling at this show that they felt they got the shaft in 2003 and were going to get even. I can't speak for the judges but it was evident that from the medal count this year the Australians were dominating. In the men's open overall 3 of the 4 were from Australia, only because there was no Australian in that class. After the disappointing 2nd place in the open I focused on the pro division and hoped for the best, but that didn't go well either. I ended up placing 5th, and was deflated after having such high hopes, so I went home with my head down, not knowing that all that was going to change soon.

After the USA, I was so excited how much better I felt and looked and of course winning the top National Natural Title, I sent an email over to Nautilus and explained to them how I had changed my training by obtaining a Bowflex earlier in the year. About a week or so after coming home from the Natural Olympia I received a call from one of their representatives that they wanted to shoot a commercial with me and to meet them in Portland in early December. Now things were looking up again. The commercial experience was a blast, even though it may

not sound like it. I was taken to a warehouse in downtown Portland, where I stood mostly unclothed filming a minute commercial that took a little over 7 hours, but I enjoyed every minute of it. I have always been fascinated with TV and movies and how they are made and it was quite the experience to endure. When we finished I didn't expect much and didn't know when or if it would even run on TV at all.

2005

The New Year began and I was still reeling from my disappointing performance at the Natural Olympia, but was excited about doing a spot for Bowflex, even though I didn't know if anything would come out of it, I was never told anything. About a month or two into the year there were posts on the ABA/INBA site that a few competitors failed their drug tests at the Natural Olympia and placements would eventually change. It took to about spring and four competitors that year failed drug tests. Three of the competitors' placement would affect mine. First, the Australian competitor that beat me in my class and won the overall tested positive for heightened testosterone levels. So, I received my 1st place and Gold Medal but was screwed out of the Overall due to that I wasn't even in it to get a score, which I felt I was the favorite to win especially coming of the USA overall title. Next, two of the professionals tested positive, one for heightened testosterone levels and one for ephedrine. My 5th place turned to 3rd and I received the bronze, but chose not to take the money. People always ask me if it makes me mad when competitors test positive and I lose a medal or a chance at an overall, and I tell them yes, but if they didn't catch them I might lose to them again the next contest or year. My belief is that this incident with the failed drug test derailed the documentary. We never heard from the company again, even though I wish they would have finished and showed how

this sport does what he says. It is meant for drug-free athletes and if you are not, then there is a good chance you will get caught.

Training had been going really well, and with the good news about new medals I was already planning out how I wanted this year to go, but during spring break I felt a slight tear in my shoulder doing 405lbs on bench press. I tried to fight through the pain, but it was becoming unbearable. I am not one to go a doctor, or use any type of aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol. I have always had the belief that God gives us pain for a reason. There is good pain and bad pain. Good pain is the soreness you feel from a good workout that your muscles are growing, bad pain is telling you to avoid something you're doing wrong. Around my colleges years I started to realize that when you mask the pain, you are only getting rid of the pain temporarily not permanently. I was determined to repeat my Overall USA title so I realized training had to change. I started icing my shoulder at least once or twice a night and stretching in the day after a hot shower to warm it up. I rearranged my workout schedule to a push-pull with chest and back together so I knew the area was completely warm, and added full leg days to give the should extra rest. My reps went a little higher and the weight got a little lighter, so I focused more on full range of movement and form. Also, I had to change the way I slept. It was normal for me to sleep on this shoulder, but it just killed to do it, so I had to relearn a new sleep pattern on my other side using a pillow to elevate the shoulder. After a few months I was feeling better but there still was a little pain.

In the spring our fourth and last child was born, Maxton. I knew we wouldn't be able to leave him at home at this early of an age, so he had to come with us for this year's events. It was work hauling him and all of his stuff to Vegas twice this year, but was worth it having him

and Heidi with me.

I was about one month out of the return to the USA when my phone and email started ringing off the hook and filling up. As I stated before I knew nothing about what was going to happen and sure enough a Bowflex commercial was playing with my name on it. No one could believe it was me. I believe it was the 1st commercial that they actually used a name with it. Usually the commercials were anonymous male models. When I got to Vegas I was excited to try for my first repeat title for the Overall. At this time I think no one in ABA history has ever won two let alone back to back. Quickly, it became apparent that a lot of people had seen the commercial and I still had not seen it yet. The night before the show I couldn't sleep so I went out in the other room of our hotel and turned on ESPN. Around 2:30am the commercial came on and I couldn't believe that I was watching myself on TV. The funny thing is that it relaxed me and instilled my confidence to go back to sleep. I think this was God's way of telling me it's ok, just relax, everything is fine. The next day I did repeat with a 1st in my class and my 2nd Overall USA title. So now the big challenge was to get ready and win my 1st World Overall Title.

Getting home after repeat victory, things started getting busy. I was getting offers to do more things and I guess when you have a nationally televised commercial with your name on it that happens. A few days after getting home a representative from Nautilus (HW for Bowflex) contacted me and asked if I wanted to go the 2005 Mr. Olympia and work the booth at the Olympia Expo at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Trust me it was a quick reply of yes, as long as I had a place to train, and that wasn't very hard to find. This was the 40th anniversary show of the Mr. Olympia so it was expected to be the largest of all time, especially since they were bringing in all of the former winners, including Arnold who was Governor at this time.

On Friday, we worked the booth all day and many people recognized me from the

commercial which had been running for at least two months now on over 15-20 channels nationally. I remember when someone would contact and let me know that they saw the spot I would ask them what channel did you see it on, and what time? It was interesting to know the different genres it showed up on like comedy central, spike, discovery, or ESPN. I was blown away by the size of the expo. This was also the 1st year the Olympia show partnered up with the UFC or MMA in general. I got to meet Chuck Liddell, Dana White, Forrest Griffin, Bonner, Koscheck, and other guys from one of my favorite shows, the Ultimate Fighter. That night I was able to go back stage because I was presenting the 5th place award to the fitness competitor. I ended staying backstage all night because that is where everyone was. After the show, we met up with friend of the nautilus rep that was a multimillionaire. We ended up having dinner at the top of the Rio hotel and later went dancing on the floor that is on top of the building. It was amazing seeing the entire city of Vegas at night from that view. It was so much fun, it was like a dream.

On Saturday, I got to meet more of my childhood role models like Lou Ferigno, Sergio Olivia, and later Arnold, and the other greats showed up backstage. That night was the men's bodybuilding and being backstage you get to see everything and talk to everyone. I got to hand the 5th place trophy to Victor Martinez that year. All I wanted was someone shorter than me, but as I stated earlier almost all of them are except for Gunter. That year I got to meet Gunter for the 1st time and he had also been sponsored by Nautilus. I was impressed that he took time and talked with me about many different things, very nice guy, I can see why he is a fan favorite. Being backstage was a wakeup call to see what a lot of these guys really look like not holding a pose. I was shocked by how many had guts that stuck out further than their chest, from my understanding is due to growth hormone enlarging the intestines. It confirmed to me

that the path I had chosen was the right one. We finished watching all the past winners gather together for a celebration on stage and backstage, and watching Ronnie Coleman tie Lee Haney's record of 8 Olympia titles in a row. I remember standing with Lou Ferigno and my Nautilus rep watching on the closed circuit, it was very surreal. That night after the show, we met up again with the Nautilus rep friend, but this time we drove to his mansion outside of Vegas in a gated community. It was an amazing house, you name it, it had it, waterfall, 7 big screens, wine and cigar cellars. Everyone, except for me ended up eating, drinking, and smoking cigars outside. People would just show up and we made the table larger outside for whoever showed up. A few guys would show up that were directing big movies; another was a popular performer in Vegas and is still in there today. It was crazy, but so much fun to just sit and talk. I remember sitting in a lounge chair next to the heated pool and looking up at the stars telling myself this is how rich people live.

One month later, I was making my 3rd trip to Vegas in three months for the Natural Olympia; this was the year I got really burned out with Vegas and was hoping it would change to another venue. As usual, I was expecting to be the favorite going into this show. I had just come off my 2nd Overall USA title and was leaner for the Olympia, which the international judges tend to favor over the more mass of USA judges. I ended up taking 2nd to another Australian that was very tall (6'5) with terrible symmetry and not enough mass to cover his body, but was extremely lean. After a month or two I found why he was so lean, he failed his Australian test a month before for BZP. Apparently it is a recreational drug used for cutting up in New Zealand and Australia, but is banned by the organization. So, I lose to another cheater and another overall world title chance taken from me, to another competitor that is never seen or heard from again.

2006

This was the year I started doing more speaking engagements. Advocare had asked me if I wanted to speak at a few local and regional events. Always looking for a new challenge I thought what better than public speaking in front of a few hundred people. I have always felt comfortable speaking about myself in front of small groups such as the boys ranch or football teams, but in front of hundreds of adults I knew would be a little harder but I needed to learn from it. This year they scheduled me for a Portland trip where Josh Brown (Seahawks kicker) would speak after me, so this made me even more nervous.

Training was going well, but I knew this year was going to be a rough year for me. I was still dealing with a sore shoulder and most of my heavy training was out. I had dropped a few pounds from last year due to starting my lighter lifting so early, but as always I was planning on doing my best. I was the first to repeat at the USA so I wanted to be the first to threepeat. Also, the Natural Olympia was in Australia again this year, and I knew I wouldn't be able to go because I can't get two weeks off of work. When you work in a correctional instruction as a teacher, it is tough to get people to fill in for you, so it is a good thing I am rarely sick. During my career of a little over 13 years at the facility, I have only taken 2 sick days for myself. One was when I caught the actual influenza virus and was in bed three straight days with 103 fever. My wife finally dragged me out of bed and to the clinic. The 2nd time was when I had a large Lypoma in my back, and had to have surgery to remove it. Overall, I have been very blessed with good health. Now as for pain, that is another story. I began to learn that as you age your body takes a little time longer to recover. I started spreading my workouts out a little more to gain extra rest between muscle groups. I don't stop working out when I have pain. I have

always believed that God gave a pain for a reason. There is good pain and pain. Good pain is the soreness you feel when you have worked the muscle thoroughly and you now it needs it rest to grow. Then there is that sharp pain that hinders you from doing certain things. Instead of masking that pain with medication, I will heat, ice, and avoid anything that bothers the area. Most pains tend to go away after a day or so following that strategy, but if it is a constant pain that doesn't go away, a visit to the doctor may be needed.

My commercial was still seeing a lot of playing time and I was enjoying my short 15 minutes of fame. I was in talks with Nautilus about doing a follow up spot, but my contact ended up leaving the company to do something else. After that I only heard from them a few other times.

At the USA, I was confident to retain my title, but those plans were thwarted with a 3 person judging panel. No organization should ever use less than 5 judges and 7-9 is optimal, but I understand that if you lose someone last minute it can be tough to replace a qualified judge. I won my class title again for the 6th time in a row and this is around the time I was really thinking how cool it would be to be the only competitor in ABA/INBA history to win 10 USA class titles in a row. I was extremely confident in winning the overall this year since a few of the competitors I had beaten before. According to the judges scoring later, it was given to the medium-short competitor who I placed ahead of in an overall before and a professional division a year or so before. The score was 2-1, he received 2, I got 1 point. This was the 2nd time I had lost the USA by 1 lousy point. This goes to show you that you have to be on your toes at all times. You never know when a judge is looking and that one time you do something or let your air out, which could be the difference between winning and losing. As I stated earlier, I sat out

the Olympia partly due to the poor judging at the USA and not being able to get the days off needed to go.

2007

This was going to be an exciting year. I had heard that the Natural Olympia was going to be in Greece around thanksgiving, and I had been saving personal days to try and make the trip to compete, knowing this would be a once in a lifetime chance. Also, my shoulder started to feel better so I began getting back to heavier training in order to increase my size from the past two years. The BNBf (British Natural Bodybuilder Federation) joined the INBA this year, so we knew there would be some really good competition.

The year started off great with a trip to Dallas to speak at the annual conference for Advocare with James Brown (football analyst), Karl Hankin, (NFL Player), and Jannet Clark (Power Team member). We had an amazing time speaking and performing feats of strength in at the convention center. We were treated extremely well; it convinced me more that I was where I belonged with the right supplement company. The first night I spoke in front of thousands of distributors, then the next night we signed autographs and Jannet Clark who was ripping phone books in half, rolled up a frying pan and used a wonderful metaphor about asking for help. I was the help, she put me on the spot and wanted me to come on stage to see if I could unroll the pan, which I did, but it definitely is a great grip exercise. Sunday, it almost felt more like a service which was wonderful since the company was founded by a Christian man with Christian principles. James Brown gave a wonderful lecture about his life and being successful. The whole weekend was a lot of fun; I finally got to meet some of the higher ups in the organization along with my main contact that I had spoken with over the years on the

phone.

A few months later in the spring I was approached by an old acquaintance that was now the anchor for one of the major networks in the area. He had interviewed me years ago when I played baseball for a local independent baseball team, and when I had went to Hawaii for my 1st world show. Kevin knew I was from the area and had shot the Bowflex commercial and wanted to know if I wanted to come in and do a live fitness segment on the Good Morning Northwest (GMNW) morning show. At first, I wasn't sure I wanted to get up that early but it was before school started so I thought it would be an interesting challenge. For the 1st year I was very nervous, but he did a great job of leading me through the segments. We had a lot of fun, there was so much energy and goofing around. One of my favorite segments is when Paul Rodriquez (the comedian) came in for the day, because he was doing a performance that night at the convention center. He pretty much had free reign, he would just pop in during a skit at any moment. Luckily, we all had thick skin because he didn't hold back much, but I remember my face hurting from all of the laughing. In all he was a really nice and friendly guy.

In the summer, Advocare called and told me that the Portland trip had gone so well, they wanted me to speak in Seattle with Josh Brown again. We stayed in a very lavish hotel that had a large gym next to it, because no matter where I am at I am always in training, at the least doing cardio. That night I met Josh, and he and I spoke then signed autographs for a while after the show. My son really wanted to meet him since he just started playing grid kid football himself, so he signed a football for him and got a picture together. He was an extremely gracious person.

The USA was moved from Vegas to Venice in Los Angeles. I was happy for that since I was getting burned out with Vegas from all of my trips there. I was excited for it to be in Venice

since I wanted to go to Venice beach and see the roots of bodybuilding. For those that have been there in recent years then you know what's coming. I was so disappointed to see the bums, homeless people, beggars, and drug addicts that cover that entire area. I remember seeing one person working out there and thousands trying to sell you crap. It was disgusting and very disappointing to see once such a fine area for health and fitness is turned into an area for death and degradation. I remember my wife telling me let's get out of here and we walked to the Santa Monica pier, which is a really nice area to enjoy the rest of the day. The next day at the USA, I won my 7th Tall/Heavy weight class title, and the overall this year was really strange. For some reason, no one was sure why they decided not to handout an overall. My guess is that they wanted to make it a more team concept going to Greece.

Getting ready for Greece was an extremely motivating factor. I have never been to Europe and my wife and I had really been looking forward to a trip just for us. We knew we were going to be competing on 2-3 days so whatever we could squeeze in to travel around there might be the only chance we get. Luckily this year the show was around thanksgiving so I knew I would have a few extra days off to travel, and we definitely wanted to fly down to Athens. The show was in the older part of Greece, Thessaloniki. The hotel we stayed at was right on the Mediterranean Sea. Our room overlooked it and it seemed to go on forever, it was an amazing sight. Being in the old part of Greece, the people weren't very friendly, you couldn't find anyone that spoke English, and even a friend that was with us that spoke Greek was having issues with the locals. I now understand where the saying, "It's all Greek to me," came from. There is no possible way to read any sign there unless you were born there, but it was a beautiful place to visit and sight see. We flew on Thanksgiving Day, which sucked because we would have been at my parents having a huge thanksgiving meal with all of my

family. My mom always goes all out and I put on a few lbs, but this year she promised to do another for me when I got back. The Olympia was scheduled at the convention center over the next two days. I was expecting to do as well as I have in the past few shows and was expecting that maybe this year would be my shot to win the overall title, since the drug testing in previous shows had eliminated a lot of the competitors, there were some old, but more new. I ended up placing 2nd in the Tall/heavy class to the competitor from Great Britain. I believe that I had him in symmetry and mass, but he came in extremely ripped, and that was the deciding factor. As another contest passes I was disappointed but wouldn't let it ruin the rest of our trip. The next day a group of competitors flew down to Athens. It was absolutely amazing. First, I never realized how big Athens is. The people were so friendly, especially to tourists. We got a hotel right at the bottom of the Acropolis. My plan was to see as much as I could, so there was no slowing down. I have always been fascinated with architecture and when you see the raw size, but artistic beauty of their work, it is amazing. I was in awe, and took over a thousand pictures to remember as much as I possibly could. I wish we could have stayed longer, but I missed my family, this would be the longest we had ever been away from them. When I got back my mom kept her promise and we had another thanksgiving. Eating after a contest is one of the best rewards for hard work.

2008

This year's Natural Olympia show was going to be held in San Francisco, and the USA was going to be in L.A. again. As usual I wanted to repeat at the USA and win the overall, hopefully taking that momentum into San Francisco. Heidi and I had never been to S.F. so this would be a new adventure for us and a little closer to home. Flying to Greece and back was

long and we didn't want to fly that long again for some time. The GMNW show had been going well, they had switched a few of the staff, but that just allowed me to change what I was doing to keep it fresh. I was shooting two spots a month every two weeks, and the hardest part is coming up with new and good information in different ways.

The show in L.A. went pretty well, I won the Tall/heavy title again for the 8th time and now realized the possibility of pulling off two more was close, but yet again to everyone's confusion the overall was not handed out. We were all wondering if this is how the overall for team USA would be from now on and it would turn to a more team oriented competition.

Going to San Francisco was a lot of fun. We stayed along the pier area most of the time and tried to visit the normal landmarks. I have always enjoyed learning about the early history of cities and their origins. We took a wonderful boat trip round Alcatraz and under the Golden Gate Bridge which was beautiful. Contest day came and I was determined to get my Gold Medal back from the Brit and finally win an overall world title. That wouldn't happen. I would end up taking 2nd place again and watching him lose another overall to the smaller competitor. Approaching judges can be a tricky but necessary thing to do. You don't want to sound ungrateful but learn in order to improve. I asked a few of them what he had that I didn't and the consensus was that I had the size and symmetry but he was always leaner. This has always been a frustrating response to get. I had always thought that each category was judged separately but it doesn't matter if you score higher in two of the three, if a guy is shredded that always seems to get more points not matter what, especially in the international events. Being frustrated I knew I was going to have to wait two more years for another chance at him, since the 2009 Natural Olympia was in Australia again.

2009

Knowing that I only had one show this year, and a few other engagements going on I found my training slacking a little bit for the first time. My motivation had dropped but I never missed any training, just wasn't training as hard as I should have. I was really busy doing the morning show, speaking engagements, going back to school, coaching baseball, camping, and getting ready for my 20th class reunion. Also, I knew I was only doing one show this year and that they probably wouldn't have an overall like the last two years so all I wanted to do was win my class again for the 9th time. The day before the show my wife and I were lucky enough to get in the front row of the Jay Leno Show the first week of his comeback to late night. It was really fascinating watching the whole taping process. I won my 9th USA tall/heavy, but this year they decided to bring the overall title back which I lost to a newcomer that I haven't seen since that show. There is an old saying, "those who fail to prepare, prepare to fail." I was happy the year was over and decided to enjoy the rest of the year with my family, and start laying out my plan for 2010. After owning up to my disappointing showing at the USA I decided during the winter to go back through all the notebooks that I have kept to track my lifting days and diet for the past 10 years and see what has changed. My father once told me that the dullest pencil is better than the sharpest mind. We always think we will remember what we did the day or week before, but we forget stuff we do on the same day. I realized that in 2005 when I hurt my shoulder that I had switched my work out completely to accommodate for the pain, but now that my shoulder was better I decided to go back to the workout I was doing previously. In November, I went back to doing one upper body and one lower part for every workout day. Also, I decided to cut back on cardio until only a few months out from the show. I had been

overtraining with too much cardio in the morning which weakened me for my afternoon workout. I was also able to put on a little more weight which helped in the strength dept., but knew I might have to adjust the diet and cardio a little earlier to compensate. The past few years I was doing cardio morning and night all year round, which kept me within 10-15 lbs. of my contest weight, but affected my strength quite a bit. Allowing my weight to go a little higher I was able to lift more weight as I did five years ago before the shoulder strain.

I also got some bad news this year that my mom was diagnosed with cancer, specifically Mesothelioma, which is a form of lung cancer. Here is a woman that never smoked a cigarette or drank a drop of alcohol. It was believed that she may have gotten from her father who worked in the Hanford area and brought it home on his clothes. Over the next year and a half I would watch her go through two surgeries, six weeks of chemo, and six weeks of radiation. My mother is the toughest and strongest person I know, she put up with my dad and us for all of these years, I know she will get through this.

2010

I was now into my 3rd year of doing the live morning show (GMNW) and still having fun working with new anchors. I did a local speaking engagement for Advocare focusing on the performance elite line products. Drew Brees had just become MVP of the Super Bowl and national Advocare spokesman. I was featured along with Drew and Wes Welker on the brochure ad for the performance elite line, so there was a lot of buzz for Advocare products at this time. Also, in the spring I began writing online articles for Washington Sports Network (WSN) which was a network focusing on local sports and athletes, mainly for high school athletes.

This year my motivation was back, and I was determined to have my best showing at the USA and earn my 10th 1st place in a row, and get back my gold medal back from the British competitor. I remember training days when I would get tired or complain of something and think about what my mom was going through and then I would push harder. Waiting two years to compete is always tough, but it does allow for more rest and training in the off-season compared to seasons where you compete at more shows. This year the USA was at the Imperial Casino in Vegas, which was nice coming back after being in L.A. for 3 years. I got really burned out with L.A., there is a lot more to do in Vegas, plus the town is much cleaner. I ended up winning the my 10th class title which I had been wanting for at least 3 years, so it was nice to accomplish that goal, but lost the overall to the short competitor that came in very good condition. While I was in Vegas, my mom and dad were in L.A. for her second surgery. It was hard to focus on my task, but I know my mom would want me to do my very best, and I wasn't going to let her down. Now it was time to get ready for the Natural Olympia. I decided to add one more workout day into my routine, but mainly focus on having it be more conditioning with weights. I focused on a few Bowflex, abs, and leg exercises in between shoulder day and arm day. I was hoping it would help develop more cuts by doing higher fuller reps with very little rest in between sets. I performed this for 7 straight weeks leading up to the show.

The Natural Olympia was held in Reno, NV this year for the first time at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino. The venue was outstanding, and especially large. We arrived on Thursday just in time for sign-ins. I had found out that the previous weekend in L.A. who had won the Natural Universe Competition. A fellow tall competitor that I have beaten a few times in the past beat out the British competitor in the tall then went on to take the overall. I was told that both of them would be here. This got me really excited because from the start my plan was to











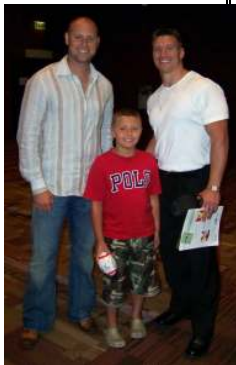








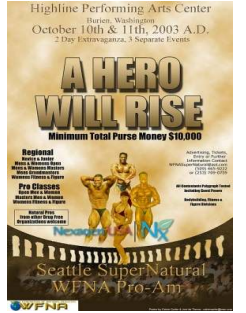
avenge my loss at the past two Natural Olympia shows. I ended up winning the tall class for my 5th gold medal beating the Natural Universe Champion from the previous weekend, but the British competitor was nowhere to be seen. Someone told me later that flew home and chose not to do this show that day. It's surprising that you would come that far across the pond and not compete at the largest show in the world. Well, even though I won it wasn't as sweet at getting a chance to revenge my only two losses at the Natural Olympia. Now my focus was on the overall. Scoping the competition, I had mainly thought it would be between me and the short class competitor, but the medium competitor from Australia ended up getting the overall. I was disappointed, but that seems to be the case. I'm not done, one of these years I will accomplish my goal and win the world overall title.

2011- Fit, Forty, and Father of Four

This year is an important year because I turn 40. Many people and experts believe that the 40 is the next 30. I don't know what my future holds but I still plan on competing this year and staying in shape. As usual my goals are to win the USA again, and get my first overall World Title, but from day one, my main goal was to be in as good of shape as my kids are when they are teenagers. If they come to me and say dad I want to play this or ride that, will you come with me, I will say, you bet.

In early spring of this year, my mother Joanne passed away from a fifteen month battle with cancer. She was the only one that knew I was writing this book, it was our little secret. I have dedicated this book and this year to my mother to remember the gifts and wisdom she passed down to me. She will be loved and missed. Too be continued...

Image Gallery

 <p>Paul Rodriguez and I on KVEW GMNW</p>	 <p>Back to Back Overall USA Titles</p>	 <p>Chuck Liddell (UFC), Keith (Nautilus Rep), and I</p>	 <p>Bowflex Shoot</p>	 <p>Gunter at '05 Olympia</p>
 <p>Lou Ferrigno at '05 Olympia</p>	 <p>Future Stars</p>	 <p>Heidi and I '10 Olympia</p>	 <p>5th Gold '10 Natural Olympia</p>	 <p>70th BDAY fishing trip with father and brothers</p>
 <p>Josh Brown (Seahawks), Mason and I</p>	 <p>Rick Heintz Extremely Inspirational BB</p>	 <p>Chad A. Martin Advocate Endorser since 2002</p>	 <p>1st ever BB show</p>	 <p>Ron Williams (Hawaii)</p>
 <p>1st Silver Medal to Brit (Greece)</p>	 <p>Presenting 5th Place award at '05 Olympia</p>	 <p>1st Overall Title</p>	 <p>9/11 Memories</p>	 <p>Highline Performing Arts Center Tacoma, Washington October 10th & 11th, 2003 A.D. 2 Day Extravaganza, 3 Separate Events A HERO WILL RISE Minimum Total Purse Money \$10,000 Regional Pro Classes Seattle SuperNatural WFNA Pro-Am WFNA</p>



9/11/02 show with amazing U.S. flag



Pete Geraghty Artwork



1st ever ABA show (Mr. Natural Hollywood)



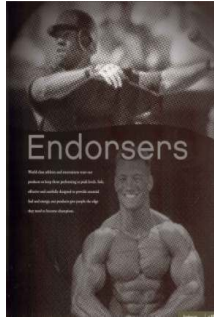
Heidi and I Hawaii



UFC Dana White '05 Olympia (Vegas)



#10 in a row USA



Advocare Endorser Mag



L.A. Photo Shoot



First 2nd place (NPC IronMan Natural)



Arnold and Zane at '05 Olympia (Vegas)



Neil and Joanne (Parents)



My baby boy Maxton



Mason and I Allstars



My Girls (Mckenzie and Marlee)



Heidi and I at the Acropolis (Greece)



Fat baby boy, almost 11 pounds



Farm life



Hunting season



Siblings



Mother

Contest Titles

1st Place- Tall/Heavy Class- 2010 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia XIII (RENO-Gold Medal)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2010 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas) #10
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2009 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Los Angeles)
2nd Place- Tall/Heavy Class- 2008 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia XI (San Francisco-Silver Medal)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2008 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Los Angeles)
2nd Place- Tall/Heavy Class- 2007 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia X (Greece-Silver Medal)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2007 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Los Angeles)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2006 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
5th Place- Professional Class- 2005 PNBA Mr. Natural Olympia VIII (Las Vegas)
1st Place- Tall/Heavy Class- 2005 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia VIII (Las Vegas-Gold Medal)
Overall Champion- 2005 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2005 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
3rd Place- Professional Class- 2004 PNBA Mr. Natural Olympia VII (Las Vegas-Bronze Medal)
1st Place- Medium Tall Class- 2004 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia VII (Las Vegas-Gold Medal)
Overall Champion- 2004 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2004 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
4th Place- Professional Class- 2003 WFNA Supernatural (Seattle, WA)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2003 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
2nd Place-Professional Class- 2002 PNBA Mr. Natural Olympia V (Phoenix-Silver Medal)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2002 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia V (Phoenix-Gold Medal)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2002 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
1st Place-Heavyweight -2002 West Coast Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Kennewick)
Overall Winner - 2002 West Coast Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Kennewick)
2nd Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2001 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Universe (Los Angeles)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2001 ABA/INBA Mr. Natural Olympia IV (Hawaii-Gold Medal)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2001 ABA/INBA Team USA Natural Nationals (Las Vegas)
1st Place-Tall/Heavy Class- 2001 ABA/INBA Mr. Hollywood Natural (Los Angeles)
2nd Place-HeavyWeight-2000 Ironman Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Everett)
1st Place-Heavyweight -2000 Inland Pacific Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Spokane)
Overall Winner - 2000 Inland Pacific Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Spokane)
1st Place-Heavyweight -2000 West Coast Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Richland)
Overall Winner - 2000 West Coast Natural Bodybuilding Championships
1st Place-Heavyweight -2000 Northwest Natural Bodybuilding Championships (Portland)
1st Place-Heavyweight -1999 Northwest Natural Bodybuilding Championships
1st Place-Heavyweight -1999 West Coast Natural Bodybuilding Championships