



The 1985 Dial Award winners, Jeff George and Gea Johnson, posed happily at the Touchdown Club's 51st Annual Timmie Awards Banquet in Washington, D.C.

Dial Honors Athletes/Scholars

In Washington, D.C. — a city with more than its share of pomp and circumstance, where ceremony is the rule rather than the exception — the thought of another night out, another reception is enough to chill one's enthusiasm for such "special" events. On this particular night in mid January, however, there was an aura of genuine excitement among the select of Washington as the Touchdown Club's 51st Annual Timmie Awards Banquet got underway.

The 1500-plus guests were in a festive mood, ready to honor professional and amateur athletes and coaches at an event *Sports Illustrated* has called "one of the most prestigious awards banquets in the country." Among the honorees were baseball great Rod Carew, Penn State head football coach Joe Paterno, Chicago Bears football superstar Walter Payton — and the Dial High School Athletes of the Year, Gea Johnson and Jeff

George.

Johnson and George would be formally presented with the respected Dial Award, the premier honor of the Dial National Amateur Sports Program (DNASP).

Thousands of athletes have participated in the broad range of events underwritten by the DNASP since it began in 1979. The program consists of national, regional and local sports activities, and all events are either free to the participants or the paid proceeds are donated to a local charity.

The Dial Award is presented annually to both the best male and female high school senior athletes/scholars in the country, who are selected by a nationwide blue-ribbon panel of more than 50 coaches, college recruiters and sports writers. The selections are based not only on outstanding athletic performances, but also on academic and civic achievements.

As Dial Award winners, Johnson and George join an elite group of past winners who have graced the world of sport. Past recipients include Herschel Walker, 1982 Heisman trophy winner and now a United States Football League running back; Carol Lewis, track star and Olympic contender; Elaine Zayak, former Women's World Figure Skating Champion; Chris Spielman, Ohio State University football star; Cheryl Miller, four-time women's college basketball All-American; and last year's winners, Nora Lewis, basketball star at Louisiana Tech, and Hart Lee Dykes, the Oklahoma State football team's most promising newcomer.

The credentials of Johnson and George are every bit as impressive as those of past Dial Award winners and their futures are just as bright.

GEA JOHNSON

Gea Johnson was a high school track star and one of the best basketball players in Arizona in 1983, but the state's spring athletics schedule made participating in both sports impossible. Forced to choose, Gea picked track, and her choice led quickly to a gold medal in international competition.

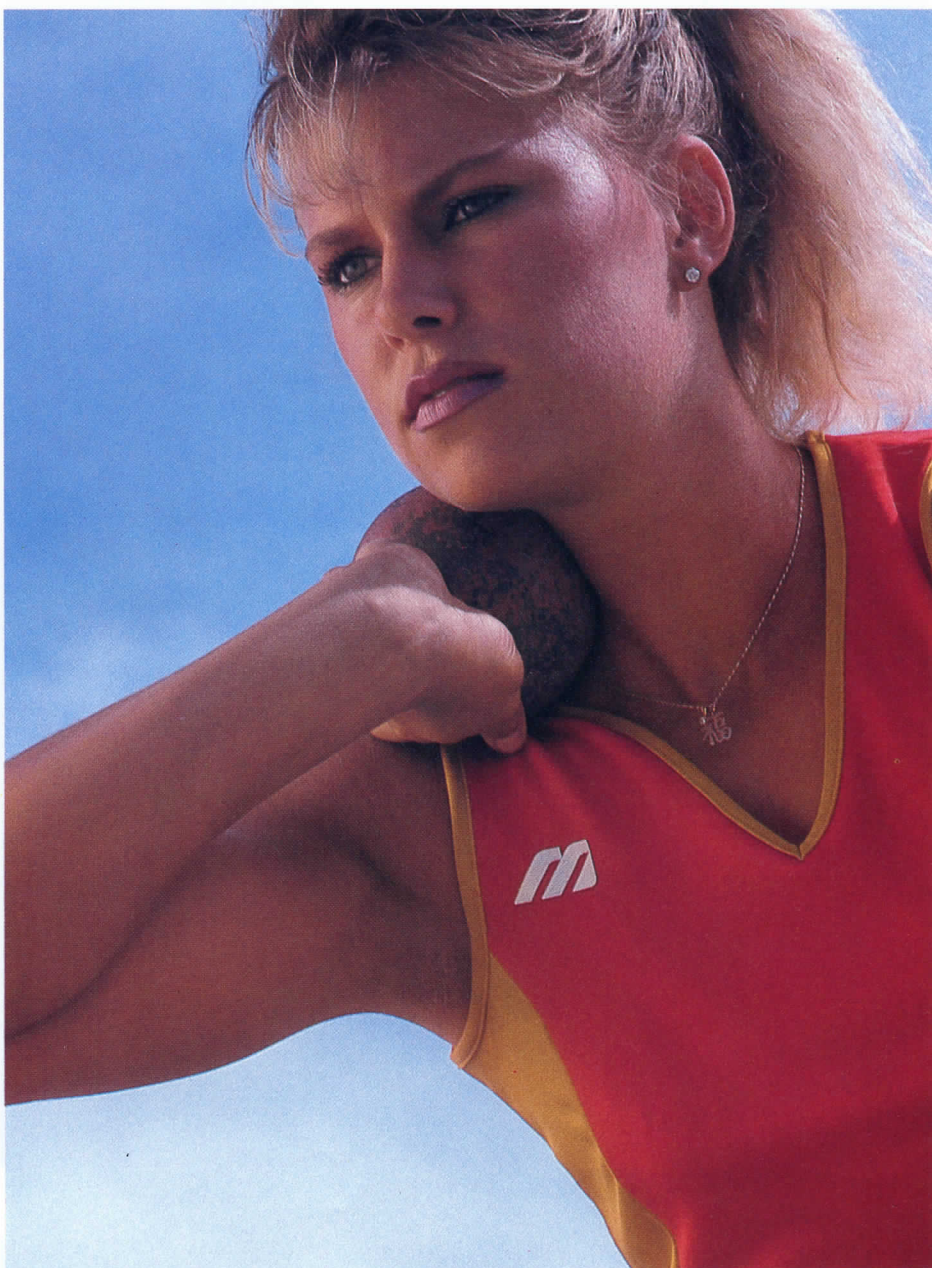
In 1985, she was a member of the United States team of elite athletes who competed in the International Sports Exchange track meet in China and Hong Kong, and she returned home as a gold medal winner in the hurdles and the long jump. Excellence in two events might satisfy most athletes, but Gea has trained to become a champion in the heptathlon, which requires mastery of seven events.

The heptathlon includes the 100-meter hurdles, 200-meter dash, 800-meter run, javelin throw, shot put, long jump and high jump. Gea has been Arizona's heptathlon champion for the past two years. In 1985 her overall performance at the prestigious Mount San Antonio Relays track and field competition held on the campus of Mount San Antonio College in Walnut, California, established her as a contender for the 1988 Olympic track team.

Representing Washington High School in Phoenix, this season Gea leads the state in the 100-meter hurdles, the 300-meter hurdles and the long jump. She also is second in the shot put.

Gea's academic performance equals her athletic achievement. Her scholastic record exceeds the 4.0 grade-point-average maximum because she is enrolled in the honors program at Washington High School and already has had two years of college-level French instruction. She's a member of the National Honor Society, president of the Senior Class, and a member of the Speech Team.

Gea was Washington High School's 1985 Homecoming Queen, is the current Miss National Fitness, and a successful commercial model. She is planning to enroll at Stanford University in the fall.



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