



## **Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame**

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*15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article contains excerpts from a story written by Scott Kindberg that appeared in the *Jamestown Post-Journal*, September 12, 2022. All photos credits to Kindberg.

### **Ceremony, Marker Celebrates Suhr In Fredonia**

Just after 2 p.m. Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, Rick and Jenn Suhr approached the flag pole at Barker Commons in the village. With a large crowd looking on, husband and wife reached down and they each grabbed a corner of the sheet that was covering a monument that bore the following words:

**Jenn Suhr**  
**Olympic Gold Medalist**  
**World Record Holder**  
**Presented by the Fredonia Olympic Celebration Committee**

Above those five lines was a small color photo of Jenn after she won gold in the pole vault at the 2012 Summer Games in London. She was holding an American flag. Her smile in that image was, understandably, ear-to-ear.



Jenn had much the same countenance on a beautiful late-summer weekend in her hometown.

*“This is not something you find everywhere, so thank you,” she said. ” ... I have never seen the support ... like you have shown me.”*

Ah, yes, Jenn, who announced her retirement in June, had herself quite a pole vaulting career.

*“What did you create here?” asked Rick Suhr, who is her coach and who first introduced her to the sport 18 years ago.*

*“You created Jenn. ... She is a 17-time U.S. champion. Tiger Woods never won 17 U.S. Opens (in golf), Serena Williams never won 17 U.S. Opens (in tennis), but Fredonia’s Jenn Suhr won 17 U.S. Championships (in the pole vault).*

*“What else did she do? She set the American record 15 years ago. It’s still there. It still stands. She broke it 12 times. No one has jumped it since. America’s a big place, a really big place. The world is a big place. Over a decade ago, Jenn flat-out broke the world record. ... That record still stands today. ... I never would have thought it would have stood that long.”*

Chalk that up to Jenn’s dedication to her craft, in combination with elite athleticism that, many assert, could have made her a professional in other sports had she chosen to go in a different direction.

Jenn was clearly touched by it all.

*“The support I got in high school is no different than the support I get now,” she said. “I think that matters to athletes here. What you guys do to get behind athletes in a small-town community really makes a difference and you follow us through college, you followed me throughout my pro career.*

*“It wasn’t so much the highs that mattered, it was the lows. When I was low, everyone was there to pick me up.”*

Jenn needed no such encouragement on Saturday. Her smiles spoke volumes.





*“This is a phenomenal gathering,” Rick said. “My job was easy. There were four things in this before I was involved. You had good teaching, great community, good coaching and phenomenal parenting.*

*“About a year ago, a reporter asked me, ‘What would you want Jenn to be remembered for more than anything?’ I simply said she’s a better person than she is a pole vaulter and that tells you the measure of influence that the community here in Fredonia has had in creating just a great, all-around champion.”*

## **Jenn’s Post on Facebook**

*Saturday I was honored by my hometown, Fredonia, NY. The Fredonia Olympic Committee led by Julie Essek installed a monument in the Barker Commons Park right downtown! During the ceremony, my mind went down memory lane. This is the same park I used to stand at as a child and watch the fountains. The one I would roller blade to and drink slushies on the park bench with friends. The same park that hosted the concerts and festivals I attended all through my upbringing. All these memories came flooding back and somehow ended up in my eyes. I kept trying to blink off the tears but the speeches being given were good and hit my emotions hard.*

*During my pole vault career we planned our life by seasons. Indoor and Outdoor. The world kept moving while we focused on these two seasons which felt more like tornado and hurricane seasons. The intense training, emotions, injuries, setbacks, celebrations, heartbreak, and loads of travel made 17 years pass by without even hinting at a slowdown....and then it just ended.*

*I’ve had a lot of time to reflect and I knew exactly what I wanted this community to know when it was my turn to speak. I needed them to realize what their support meant to me. It was important to me that they understood it wasn’t just the cheers they gave during the good times. It was the support and encouragement they gave during the hard times. They were there for me and lifting me up when I was down. They became family. I felt them behind me and the extra momentum and love was needed when the struggles were too much to handle.*

*I don’t know how to ever show my gratitude but to do exactly what my community did for me for the next generation.*

💛💜 Your Fredonia Hillbilly forever 💜💛

## *Tara VanDerveer Elected to Stanford Athletics Hall of Fame*



- Entering her 37th season at Stanford, has compiled a 1,005-208 (.829) overall record since arriving on The Farm in 1985-86
- Became the all-time winningest coach in women's college basketball history on Dec. 15, 2020, and is a five-time national coach of the year (1988-90, 2011, 2021) and 17-time conference Coach of the Year
- Led Cardinal to three NCAA championships (1990, 1992, 2021), one of four coaches in the history of the sport to win at least three titles
- Additional team achievements during her Stanford tenure: 14 NCAA Final Four appearances, 39 conference titles (24 regular-season titles, 15 tournament), 17 seasons of 30+ wins
- Additional individual achievements during her Stanford tenure: two Wade Trophy Player of the Year honors, two Naismith Player of the Year honors, 34 first-team All-America honors, 19 conference Player of the Year awards
- Member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame (2011) and the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame (2002)
- Head coach of USA Basketball National Team that captured gold at 1996 Olympics, producing a 60-0 record in 1995-96 and 88-8 overall record