

ILLINOIS LEGENDS ATHLETE AWARD

HONORING ERNA WACHTEL and SANDY OLDHAM

Erna Wachtel (1907-1995) was born in Germany and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 19. She^m was an American artistic gymnast, coach and judge. Erna won many AAU titles and was named an Honorary Olympic Team member for the Olympic Games that were cancelled due to [World War II](#). Erna became an International Brevet Judge, and was the US Women's Olympic Team Coach in 1956. Erna taught at the [Chicago Park District](#) for 16 years, and In 1974 was inducted into the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame.

Sandy Oldham (1944-2022) was a Brevet Judge, H.S. Judge, and NCAA Judge who also served as Meet Referee at several NCAA National Championships. Sandy received the USAG Lifetime Achievement Award and was named Coach of the Year while coaching at Palatine H.S. She ran the Il. High School Girls' Gymnastics Meet at Palatine H.S. for over 25 years. Sandy was a Clinician for many Congresses and Symposiums and was one of the early inductees into the IHSGGC Hall of Fame.

ATHLETE'S AWARD

- FROM THE ILLINOIS LEGENDS ATHLETE AWARD COMMITTEE:

Betty Axelson-McClelland, Norbert Bendixen, Jeanne Johnson, Hilary Carlson

THIS AWARD HONORS THESE TWO ILLINOIS LEGENDS FOR THEIR STATE AND NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS, SERVICE AND PASSION FOR THE SPORT. THESE LEADERS POSSESSED STRENGTH OF CHARACTER AND TENACITY IN PURSUIT OF A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

- NOMINATIONS DUE **April 26, 2026.**
- ATHLETE MUST BE A GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR; U.S.A.
- GYMNAST MUST BE NOMINATED BY COACH
- COACH MUST WRITE A RECOMMENDATION

REQUIREMENTS:

- ◆ Athlete must have exceptional work habits
- ◆ Athlete must possess personal character traits of honesty, sincerity, pride and is considerate of teammates, family and friends
- ◆ Athlete must be dedicated, show initiative, self-discipline, responsibility, determination, courage, and a positive attitude
- ◆ Athlete must need financial assistance for college (*coach must verify need*)
- ◆ Athlete must write a paper telling why she feels she exemplifies the ideals that this award is recognizing and why she is worthy of receiving financial assistance

***ONE OTHER RECOMMENDATION FOR THE ATHLETE MUST BE SUBMITTED**
(by teacher, pastor, family friends, etc.)

*Monetary award will be paid directly to the educational institution the recipient will be attending in 2025/2026.

*Award will be presented at the Il.State Awards Banquet **JULY 26** at Abbington Banquets in Glen Ellyn

ILLINOIS LEGENDS Athlete's Award Nomination Form

Gymnast Name _____ Club _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Coach _____ Phone _____ Coaches' E-mail _____

College Gymnast Is Planning To Attend (*if known*) _____

ATTENTION COACHES: PLEASE INCLUDE WITH THIS FORM:

- 1) Coaches' Recommendation**
- 2) Athlete's Letter**
- 3) Recommendation from Teacher, Pastor or Family Friend**

****ALL RECOMMENDATION LETTERS MUST BE WRITTEN IN MICROSOFT WORD DOC.**

Please **e-mail all requirements** to:

Betty Axelson-McClelland, Eggsgymbetty@aol.com For questions, call Betty at **847-312-6476. DUE DATE: April 26, 2026.**