

2004 HALL OF FAME



Denise Yamada Axelson
Outstanding Athlete

Denise Yamada Axelson's proudest moments in her athletic career span her success as a two-sport standout at both Dos Pueblos High School and Duke University. She cites notching a 5'-10½" high jump in 1983 as one of her athletic pinnacles. That mark garnered her a first place CIF Southern Section finish, a meet and a Dos Pueblos school record and the 9th top performance in the nation.

A first-team, All-ACC selection from Duke in volleyball in 1986 capped Axelson's collegiate career in which she saw three consecutive ACC Tournament Championships and three straight appearances in the NCAA Women's Volleyball Tournament in the middle hitter and off-setter position. With a full, 4-year athletic scholarship at Duke, Axelson set three volleyball records: a match-record 31 kills against Purdue in 1986 (currently ranked 5th in the Duke record books), a season-record 67 service aces in 1984 (currently ranked 3rd) and a career-record 140 service aces from 1983-86 (currently 4th).

On the track at Duke in 1985, Axelson placed 2nd in the ACC in the high jump and topped two school records with a 5'-8" high jump (currently 2nd) and a 15'-11" long jump (not currently ranked).

Axelson's illustrious college career followed an impressive stint as a two-sport athlete at Dos Pueblos High. A varsity track standout, she participated in the high jump, long jump, triple jump and 110-meter low hurdles from 1981-83. She set school records with her CIF-winning high jump as well as a 36'-11¾" triple jump in 1982 and a 14.57-second 100-meter low hurdles in 1983. Axelson also flourished as a varsity middle hitter for Chargers' volleyball from 1981-82.

Axelson's high school athletic awards are numerous, with the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table Athlete of the Year for track in 1982 and 1983, along with Dos Pueblos Most Valuable Varsity Athlete both years.

Academically, Axelson was a member of the National Honor Society and California Scholarship Federation through all four years of high school. She graduated Duke University in 1987 with a B.S. in biology and psychology and the Presidential Leadership Award.

Currently a research coordinator with Beneficial Designs, Inc. in Minden, Nev., Axelson resides in Nevada with her husband Peter and their four-month-old daughter, Ria Maye. Her high school track coach, Gordon McClenathen, will present Axelson with tonight's award.