



NATIONAL GYM ASSOCIATION

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Craig Toth

NGA Hall of Fame – 2022

2022 NGA Hall of Fame Inductee

The year 2022 marked the 43rd year since the founding of the NGA. This is the 8th Annual NGA Hall of Fame tribute. Inductees must possess attributes that help shape the sport of natural bodybuilding and make exceptional contributions to further the growth, reputation, and character of the NGA and the sport we hold in such high esteem.

This is the first year we did NOT induct a current NGA Promoter, but a past promoter who has proven that bodybuilding gives you strength both physically, mentally and can enhance your perspective on life. We are pleased to announce the 2022 NGA Hall of Fame inductee

Craig Toth! Craig is 51 years old from Boise, ID and from 2008-2013 he promoted the NGA Idaho State Championships. Craig is a lifetime drug-free athlete and has competed in several organizations and many shows including the NGA PRO Universe ... 4 times!! Here is his story in his own words.

– Francine Bostinto

Just Another 50-Year-Old Amputee by Craig Toth

As bodybuilders, our very nature is to control our body and surroundings. This means it is important to get the right food in, reduce external stressors, and generally manipulate our bodies into fulfilling our quest to achieve our best physical self. Once someone devotes a few decades with mindfulness to this sport, it becomes an art form that's been cultivated with diligence and direct intent. The question always remains though, what happens when you get a curve ball of monumental proportion? I don't mean like getting the flu or a muscle strain as any athlete knows those issues will come and you will heal or recover given some time. I'm talking about something a bit different. In 2019, my monumental curve ball struck mightily.

In February 2019, half way into contest prep, I began experiencing bizarre symptoms. My left arm began swelling and flu-like symptoms increased in severity. After a month long struggle, and a few visits to the ER, the situation drastically turned from bad to critical. In the month before January, I continued to train with extreme fatigue and difficulty and when February came, my arm worsened and the fever was unbearable.

One Friday evening, my wife returned from work and after seeing my condition, quickly rushed me to the emergency room, and from there, memory fades into fractured segments that seem more like a nightmare and a vivid reality with scattered and random recall. Six days later, I awoke in an ICU bed with an amputated leg far above the knee, with a 7 inch segment removed from my remaining calf and 4 inches out of my left upper pec. The doctors told us the bacteria caused what was best understood as "civil war gangrene". I was intubated, with 3 wound vacuums attached to help with the healing process. I had wires everywhere and the sound of machinery kept me alive. I found out much later that I quickly became septic and after they removed many segments of my right leg, I experienced heart failure and flat lined for 6 minutes. My kidneys had failed requiring dialysis, my brain health, due to oxygen deprivation for that length of time was unknown, and my survival was doubtful. The bacteria that I caused my condition (clostridium septicum), simply kills everyone and there are no known survivors for anyone afflicted by this bacteria in the national database.

My time in the ICU wasn't short. I experienced a dreadful and nightmarish 20 surgeries, endless tests, and two more near death situations. The end result after 3 months was stomach surgery where cancer was discovered that created a perforation that allowed the gangrene causing bacteria to seep out of my bowels. Once it was removed after an 8 hour invasive surgery (leaving another 7 inch abdominal scar), true healing began.

Exiting the hospital in May, I was an emaciated 130 lbs. after having lost almost 100 lbs. and I was so weak I could barely function. The bed rest made me so weak I could barely eat or shower myself, and I spent 15 hours a day sleeping for the many months that followed. Regardless of my dire situation, I started back to the gym one day after going to my wife's junior high school where she is a math teacher and began utilizing a few machines using the lightest weight they had with extreme difficulty. For many months, eating was difficult due to the 20 inch portions of small intestine that were removed and the degree of bowel damage I had, but I persevered despite this.

The process of re-creation has now been about 3.5 years and walking is still difficult and the process of regaining pieces of my old life will likely never be over. But, I continue to work daily with all the mental capacity I can muster to never miss a workout and stay healthy in order that I can become more than I currently am. In truth, these past 3.5 years isn't enough considering how far I was degenerated, but it's a start. I know it will never end, but I try each day. Despite it all, I will make my return to the sport I love this fall, which was a dream I held onto when I suffered from that hospital bed. At that point, it seemed an impossible dream and still seems surreal and incredibly scary. Today, I am no longer a 100-contest veteran with all those wins and titles, but I'm just a guy who hopes he can do what he loves again and not be a horrible shadow of what he once was. I continue to work towards this goal because that's all any of us can do. I am returning and that has to be enough.

The following is just a few of some of my prior accomplishments which serve as a reminder to why I won't quit:

- NGA 1st PRO
- 2007,8,9 (3x- also 4 2nds)
- 2009 NGA PRO Universe – 3rd tied 3 ways
- 2012 1st Grand Teton
- ABFF
- 2007-9, 12, 14 (5x) Anchorage PRO Champion
- 2008, 9 (2x) ABFF PRO Champion
- 2007 ABFF Idaho Champion
- 2007, 8 ABFF Vancouver Champion
- 2014 Overall NPC Open and Masters Champion
- Show Promotor
- 2008-2013 promoted the NGA Idaho State Championships ■