



NATIONAL GYM ASSOCIATION

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Lee Banks

NGA Hall of Fame – 2024

2024 NGA Hall of Fame Inductee

This year marks 45 years since the founding of the NGA, this is the 10th 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 year we are pleased to announce the 2024 NGA Hall of Fame inductee goes to Lee Antonio Banks. Unfortunately, on February 2, 2023 Lee passed away from a long battle of cancer at the age of 52, but he fought till the end. Let me share his impressive background with you so you get a sense of why Lee was selected.

Lee Banks was first a Godly man, devoted husband, and loving father. He was both a visionary and a dream chaser. He had an entrepreneurial spirit in his lifetime. He owned multiple early learning centers, he was a real estate agent licensed in the state of Florida, and was a Certified Personal Trainer and a Behavior Change specialist. He also served in the army during the Gulf War.

He dreamed of earning his living doing what he loved and making his passion his purpose. To that he grew a bodybuilding team (Team Banks) into an enterprise. As CEO of Lee Banks Fitness Enterprises, he had 20 years of fitness industry knowledge and diverse fitness experience. His enterprise reflected his vision, aspirations, talents, and skills. At Lee Banks Fitness Training Facility his mission was to make a difference in the lives of the clients served by teaching them how to make health and fitness a lifestyle. As a family man and busy CEO he understood the difficulty in maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. He was committed to helping others gain the knowledge and establish the habits they needed. He was determined that Lee Banks Fitness not be just another fitness company, but a health and wellness company. Additionally, he founded The Coach's Den where he empowered aspiring fitness entrepreneurs to create the business they envisioned. And, at the NGA Lee Banks Natural Championships he encouraged aspiring bodybuilders to compete naturally. He was dedicated to the promotion of natural bodybuilding. The NGA Lee Banks Natural Championships was a celebration of that dedication.

Like almost every bodybuilder he dreamed of one day dawning what is deemed the biggest stage in bodybuilding, the Olympia. Lee achieved that dream as well. In 2017 he returned to the sport as a Natural IFBB Classic Physique Professional after a 4-year hiatus. He placed top 4 against the best of the best in four top tier competitions that year. He earned his place on the 2017 Olympia stage where he became the #9 IFBB Classic Physique Professional bodybuilder in the world, NATURALLY. He quickly

realized that it was not fulfilling the Olympia dream but the opening of the “great debate” about drug-free bodybuilding saving lives and maintaining the integrity of the sport that was the greatest accomplishment in his bodybuilding career.

In these endeavors he earned a wealth of knowledge that he willingly shared. In all his ways he was an inspiration. He believed in “walking his talk”, living his truth, and above all taking responsibility for his own happiness. In true character, during his own great battle, in his strongest storm he gracefully served to the very last moment.

On a personal note, let me share with you my experience with Lee. I only had the pleasure of being in his company maybe 3 times. He began promoting with the NGA in 2016. About two years later he calls and speaks to Andy. He proceeds to tell Andy the great news he had. He was going to bring NATURAL bodybuilding to the NPC!!! Well needless to say this conversation with Andy didn’t go over very well. Andy was actually the first to bring natural bodybuilding to the NPC in 1982. He was pretty upset with Lee and I have to say he was quite blunt. He wasn’t disrespectful in any way, but he told Lee how he felt in a nice way. I was listening to the conversation and I was like uh oh! To my surprise, five years later, Lee calls us up and asked if he could come back to the NGA. That Andy was right about what he said. I was in shock that he would come back to the NGA. But I was also impressed that a man of his caliber would admit being wrong. To me – this showed Lee’s character. A standup kind of guy. The last time I spoke to Lee at an NGA show, I didn’t recognize him. He had lost a lot of weight. I felt bad about that!! Lee told me and I quote, “KEEP THE NGA GOING. IT’S THE BEST NATURAL ORGANIZATION.” Thank you Lee for your insight. I truly appreciate everything you said and did for the NGA and natural bodybuilding.

Will everyone please stand and help me give a warm welcome to our guest of honor Lafayette Banks, Lee’s wife and love of his life.