Class Notes

Linfield Magazine Staff

Beth Rogers Thompson

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Jennifer Butcher earns bronze medal in swimming at Paralympic Games

Two weeks after the 2004 Olympic Games ended in Athens, Jennifer Butcher ’95 won a bronze medal in the 100-meter backstroke. She was competing against other swimmers with visual impairments in the Paralympics, held every four years shortly after the Olympic Games in the same venue. It was her final race, said Butcher, “I knew it was my last race,” she said, adding that she’s been in the water only twice since then. “I still love swimming, but I’ve done all I can do.”

All she can do includes setting records in the 50-yard backstroke, 200-yard medley and 200-yard relay at Linfield, where she received a degree in health education. The sport has been her guiding passion over the years. “My life revolved around swimming,” she said. That was a major reason the native of Issaquah, Wash., chose Linfield. And the swim team competed in both the NAIA National Championships all four years she was on it. All four years, she finished second in the 100-meter backstroke.

Butcher had intended to major in nursing until she realized the nursing program was in Portland, not on the main campus. “I made the choice to stay with swimming,” she said, adding that it was a satisfying decision. “I knew I wanted to do something in the health field.” She continued her education at Portland State University, earning an M.S. in special education in 1999.

Her vision had began to deteriorate in elementary school but worsened after she was a sophomore, she was diagnosed with Stargardt’s disease, which affects the macula and retina. That was 1993, the year her blurry vision reached the legally blind stage. Butcher said her sight has stabilized in recent years. She has lost her central, or detailed, vision and can read only with a magnifying glass or with large fonts on a computer screen. Her inability to decipher the numbers led her to being hired as a bus driver, which he relies on for transportation since she can no longer drive.

Butcher and husband, Bryan, who was her swim coach, live in Vancouver, Wash., where she teaches health and fitness at the Washington School for the Blind. Butcher now works with students aged 3 to 21 at the school. The emphasis is on workout routines and strength training. And, of course, the swim.

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Gary Jeske ’63 of Koski, Alaska, is senate majority leader for the Alaska State Senate.

Sylvia (Hustad) Delg P’83 of Olympia, Calif., retired more than 30 years in the medical diagnostic and electronics industries.

Fred Willeke ’65 of Pocatello, Idaho, is a member of the Kentucky Derby Museum.

Richard Brown ’66 of Tidewater, Va., retired from Park West Properties, received the Home Builders’ Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

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All she can do includes setting records in the 100-yard backstroke, 200-yard medley relay, and 200-yard relay at Linfield, where she received a degree in health education. “The sport has been her guiding passion over the years. ‘My life revolved around swimming,’” she said. That was a major reason the native of Islaqua, Wash., chose Linfield. And the swim team competed in the NAIA National Championships all four years she was on it. All four years, she finished second in the 100-meter backstroke.

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Butcher had intended to major in nursing until she realized the nursing program was in Portland, not in Falltown, where she participated in operating a bungee jumping business in Falltown and facilitated urban canoe trips. She will return to Iraq in August with Marine Mobile Helicopter Squadron 161.

Harry “Chip” and Rebecca (Harry) Taylor, both ‘82, are in the U.S. Marine Corps, Chip, a captain in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps, serves as a Medical Operations Officer, Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capabilities), and Rebecca works in the U.S. Navy Medical Corps, serves as a Medical Operations Officer, Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capabilities).
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Further information:
Contact Suzan.Huntington@linfield.edu or at 503.883.2675.

Contact information:

Randy and Robin (Brockman) Hale, both '89, of Tigard, had a son, Rowan, in August.

Tony Hodge '99 of Portland, Ore., and his wife, Heather, had a son, Ryan, Jan. 4.

Brian and Jennifer (Kuwajima) Morris '99 and '00 of McMinnville adopted a son, Nick, from Russia. Brian is an opthamologist at the Eye Care Center of McMinnville and Jennifer teaches figure skating.

Chris Turner '99 of Fredericksburg, Texas, is a middle school math teacher and coach at Fredericksburg Middle School.

Suzan Greenwood '90 of Kalispell, Mont., is a volunteer coordinator and staff event coordinator for the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance. She is also director for the Special Olympics Washington State Summer Games.


Michael and Julie (Rezk) Washburn '79 and '91 of Seattle, Wash., married James Andrew Hogue '88, Sept. 23, their second.

Gregg and Danielle (Myler) Embree '91 and '93 of Portland, Ore., announce their engagement and wedding at Salem First Presbyterian Church, Nov. 26, their second.

Dave Shubin '95 of Portland owns Shubin's Transplant Immunology Clinic of Portland.

Tanya (Sork) Cobos '96 of Portland, Ore., is assistant director of the Portland area Geisinger Health System and is an associate for Metro East Surgery Center.

Lara and Angela (Baker) McNiell '90 and '93 of Gladstone, Ore., announce their engagement and wedding at University School, Delancy Page, March 9.

Ryan Petrill '91 of Spokane, Wash., and wife, Heather, celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary.

Katherine (Pitman) Huit '88 of Portland, Ore., is volunteer coordinator for the Oregon State University football team.

Jodi Mathieu '88 of Portland, Ore., is an alternative therapist.

Richard Edwards '88 of Lake Oswego, with his wife, Jennifer Hoge, and daughter, Emily, Aug. 5.

Sean Coste '88 of Portland, Ore., is an aerospace engineer.

Dream to Fly: Howard government in the U.S. Marine Corps. She is also assistant director for the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance.

Tukumova Dec. 31.

Randy and Jennifer (Stone) Smith '89 of Livermore, Calif., and her husband, Reid, had a daughter, Lila, Feb. 10.

Ryann Bernard '02 of Portland, Ore., works for the Department of Education.

Emily Bauer '01 of Portland, Ore., is a billing manager with Country Afghan Guns.

Jeff and Kristi (Vertesi) Mackay '84 and '91 have planned for the future including Linfield College in their wills.

“Planning our life together includes discussing our assets and where they lie. We believe in higher education and the opportunities that exist with that,” he said.

The Mackays contribute annually to Linfield through the Will Fund.

Further information:
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and will teach business education at Portland State University. She is also assistant director for the Business, Economics, and Communication department at Linfield College in their wills.

The Mackays contribute annually to Linfield as partners, passed away many Feb. 22, 2005. Renshaw was born July 6, 1907, in F Skull Peak, Arizona, and came to Linfield in 1929. He was an outstanding scholarship and leadership student in his time. Renshaw was the founder and president of Talley Corporation, which developed systems to manage large quantities of data.

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Gloucester, Mass., earned a master's degree in domestic marketing for the University of Phoenix in April. Christopher and Jennifer (Kelman) Morrissey '89 and '99 had a son, Bond, Tyler Lawrence, Nov. 8, 2004. Richard and Melanie (Borte) Demko '96 of McMinnville adopted a son, December.

Jennifer (Ward) Thompson '94 of Portland is a school principal. Michelle (Miller) Moraitis '94 of McMinnville is education and events coordinator for the Home Builders Association of Washington. Kim Lewis '99 of Lake Oswego works in investment sales and financing of commercial office properties at CBRE & Welch, Inc. Brian Thorne '97 of Portland is a teacher and head football coach at Grant High School.

Suzanne Taylor '00 of Las Vegas, Nevada, received a master's degree in nutrition and food management at Oregon State University in April. She is a student in the dietetics program in Dec. 2004.


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Rob Morris '90 of Portland, Oregon, is a partner in the law firm of McDermott, Will & Emery.

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Lila Aashenbrenner received her liberal arts degree from Linfield in 1974, a year of economic doldrums. She saw her lack of specialization as a strength, not a weakness. “So many people were graduating and not getting jobs back then. I thought it would be better to be well rounded. And it couldn’t have worked out better.”

She graduated with no career goals, but with an open mind. After working in a veterinary clinic for several years, she got to know a County Sheriff’s deputy, who invited her on a ride-along. One thing led to another, and eventually she was working with animals again – on the Hillsboro Police Department’s K-9 unit. She was the only woman hired by the department and at that time the only female K-9 officer in Oregon.

“Talk about a branch not falling far from the tree,” she said, laughing at her entrenchment in this corner of Oregon. “Our mayor right now was our high school student teacher” at Aloha High School.

She may not have ventured far from home, but Aashenbrenner has worked in some exciting areas of law enforcement – narcotics and undercover operations, as well as public information and administration. She has risen steadily through the ranks in nearly 28 years with the department, from patrol to detective, sergeant, lieutenant, captain and commander, culminating in her promotion to Hillsboro’s deputy chief in 2003.

Now that she’s spending more time at a desk, she said, she misses the immediacy of being on the streets. “You never knew what you were going to be doing next,” she said. “And I really enjoyed narcotics. It always felt good to put the bad guys behind bars.”

But the work is not always as glamorous and high-tech as it is portrayed on television. “I wish we really felt good to put the bad guys away.”

“I’ve been on the job for 28 years, and there are no signs of the crime wave.”

When Rick Turner ’63 entered Linfield, he was one of only seven African-American students. He knew he had entered a world far different from his urban home-town, Hartford, Conn. He knew acquaintances back home were saying he’d soon return in defeat. He was determined to prove them wrong.

Turner came on a basketball scholarship, thanks to his high school coach’s friendship with Paul Durham ’36, then Linfield athletic director. Curtis Manns ’62, who had graduated from Weaver High a year ahead of Turner, had come to play football.

Turner calls Linfield “a saving grace.” He had to overcome academic deficiencies and loneliness. He was 17 years old and 3,000 miles from familiar faces. “In retrospect, I’m really thankful for the opportunity to go to Linfield,” says Turner. “I know it made me a better person. These were the most important four years of my life because I learned how to endure. It made me a stronger person.”

“Turner may not have found many African Americans at Linfield, but he did find a caring, supportive environment. “The people at Linfield were helpful, they were nurturing, they respected me, and I respected them. I don’t think I could have survived if the environment wasn’t warm and conducive for me at that time.”

Turner did return to Connecticut, but not in defeat. After receiving his B.A. in sociology from Linfield, he earned a master’s degree in social work from the University of Connecticut. He returned to the West Coast, completing a Ph.D. in higher education administration/public policy at Stanford.

Many scholars base articles and books on their doctoral dissertations; Turner has built a successful career on his. It is titled “The Academic Achievement and Retention of African-American Students at Black Institutions.”

“Since 1988, Turner has served as dean of African-American studies; Turner has built a successful career on his. It is titled “The Academic Achievement and Retention of African-American Students at Black Institutions.”

Since 1988, Turner has served as dean of African-American studies at the University of Virginia. “Given his accomplishments, one stands out: the University’s African-American graduation rate has steadily improved. A few years ago the rate was 87 percent, among the highest in the nation for public institutions. He also teaches a class, “Sociology of the African-American Community.”

Turner shares the lessons learned

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