

Dear USAG-CT,

In my 20 years of coaching, I have been privileged to have worked with amazing Gymnastics Professionals. Individuals whom I have a great deal of gratitude, admiration and respect. I gained so much knowledge of gymnastics, art of coaching, and the professionalism that goes with it. Likewise, I share the same sentiments for all the coaches and judges who make up USAG-CT. This includes Coaches and Judges some who have moved away and others who have left their mark and are no longer with us. Although, you all come from different gyms and we are all competitive in nature. I always took time to observe, and reflect on all of you and your athletes. I have always believed, I can learn more from others, no one man knows everything and every meet is clinic. Because of all of you, I have accomplished so much as a coach. Learning from all of you, I have loved my craft and it became a passion. This gymnastics thing becomes an extension of who we are, and so hard to leave. Thank you I feel very blessed.

I am also thankful for the athletes whose lives touched mine that thought me to communicate, motivate and be more than a text book voice. These athletes made me love coaching, and gave it meaning. It put me on a path to forge a legacy of mentor ship and advocacy for young men and women with self improvement, self independence, and self worth. Many of the qualities, I would like to instill in my own son and daughter. It strengthened me by way of many talks and long speeches given to these young athletes; simply actions speak louder than words. It's living up to my own words that have gotten me thru 3 hard years of dealing with Cancer.

My Cancer originated from a yearlong misdiagnosed condition, by an Ego driven Specialist. I have a stage 4 Metastatic Parotid Gland Cancer that has spread to my lungs and liver. I have no cure only a long road of treatments and an unpredictable end. Each day has its own challenges physically, emotionally, and spiritually, so I take things a minute or challenge at a time. I like to quote Nietzsche "He who has a way to live for can bear almost any How." I don't dwell on what I have, but rather look at the good that has come from it. God works in amazing ways. I have renewed old friendships; I have focused my love and attention to my wife and my two children. And I have been able to reflect on my life and what is meaningful to me. I can either be a patient and die from cancer or a survivor and live and thrive with cancer.

Attitude is everything! I am reminded of Holocaust survivor and author Viktor E. Frankl who stated "forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you." This is why I am accepting of what I have. My attitude towards my condition will dictate my time. So why be sour? I focus myself on my strengths, to keep fighting. I reflect and come to terms of how truly blessed my family and I are. We truly have amazing friends, and a big gymnastics family.

So my friends, I thank you for your support. I thank the many athletes that attended the fundraising clinic at CGA. Because of all of you, coaching a passion and love has turned into a book of life lessons that is giving my life's work meaning.

A special thanks to: Laurie DeFrancesco and everyone at Arena Gymnastics, Brock Freehling and everyone at CGA, Byron Knox and everyone at CATS Gymnastics Kevin and Mikki Geenty and everyone at Geenty Inc., Theresa Carrico, William Wininger and everyone at Winingers Gymnastics, Steve Redes and everyone at TNT Gymnastics and all the athletes gyms and coaches who attended the clinic. THANK YOU!

Love and Respect! Happy Holidays to all!

Coach Manny Bonilla (CATS Gymnastics)