

## Profiles of Piedmont Triad Area

### Alamance



**Brooks Morrison**, 31, will join Special Olympics Team North Carolina as a member of the golf team. He has been competing at Special Olympics events for over twenty years in golf, basketball, softball and track. Morrison will compete in the nine hole individual golf event. His coach, Wade Taylor, says Morrison understands the importance of good sportsmanship and simply loves to play sports.

Morrison's favorite Special Olympics moment came on the last hole of the 2004 Special Olympics National Golf Invitational Tournament in Southern California. He needed a two putt to earn the gold and his ball was 40 feet from the hole. He lined up his putt and carefully took his shot. The ball broke left, then right, down and around into the cup. Morrison celebrated with his Tiger Woods fist pump before joining his coach and parents in celebration.

The 1994 graduate of Williams High School in Burlington thoroughly enjoys his job at the YMCA, where he has worked for five years. Morrison says he is looking forward to traveling, but is especially excited about the dances.



**Wendy Oliver** will travel to Iowa this summer as a member of the Special Olympics Team NC bowling team. Oliver, 36, has been competing in Special Olympics for several years and is very excited to compete at the national level. She looks forward to competition every year and this will allow her to train even more.

The Burlington resident has worked at O'Charley's for a year and would like to eventually move out of her group home and into her own apartment. In her free time Oliver likes to go on walks or go shopping. The Cummings High School graduate also volunteers her time at Trollinger Treasures when she is able.

### Davidson



**Gary Arnold** of Trinity has been a basketball, bowling and athletics coach for Special Olympics North Carolina since 1981. Over the years, he has watched numerous athletes develop self-esteem through a gained sense of accomplishment and social interaction. Arnold believes that Special Olympics athletes tend to have better physical and mental health, and attributes this to the focus and teamwork capabilities they develop

through training.

The 2004 Special Olympics North Carolina Basketball Tournament was the site of Arnold's favorite competitive memory. His 3-on-3 team, down five points, was forced to move out of the zone defense for the first time. He watched as the players came together as a team and all contributed for a pull-from-behind victory that started them on the path to a silver medal. Arnold, a 55-year-old job coach, is looking forward to the nine month journey ahead that will prepare his bowling athletes for the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games. He says the shared moments of fun and struggle will offer a once in a lifetime experience for the athletes and coaches as they represent the state on a national stage.



**Brian Goins** of Lexington will join Special Olympics Team North Carolina in Iowa as a member of the bocce team. The 32 year old has been competing in Special Olympic bocce, basketball and athletics for 24 years. Goins is diligently training to compete at the national level at the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games.

Goins is extremely involved in Special Olympics and his community. He serves as a Special Olympics North Carolina Global Messenger, speaking in the community about his experiences to raise awareness for the organization. A 1992 graduate of Ledford High School, Goins hopes to one day become a Special Olympics coach and help other athletes reach their goals. He also serves in a leadership role in his local Civitan club and is always ready to lend a helping hand for their efforts.



**Carlton Morris**, 27, will compete in all six events for men's gymnastics at the Special Olympics USA National Games. A Special Olympics athlete for 19 years, he has competed in many sports, but gymnastics is his favorite. Morris had to conquer a fear of heights before he could master the rings, but the perseverance paid off at the 1999 World Summer Games where he won seven medals, including Gold for the best all-around score. Morris, a self-described perfectionist, was also chosen to perform at the Greensboro Coliseum in 2000 and 2004 with the T.J. Maxx Gymnastics World Tour of Champions.

Morris enjoys country music, watching racing and football and hanging out with his sister Carla, a cycling coach in Charlotte. He is a 1999 graduate of the Stoner-Thomas School in Lexington where he was a member of the 4-H Club and always had a part in the Christmas plays. Morris is now in his sixth year as an employee at Automotive Motors of Thomasville and the Workshop of Davidson. He likes to help out his friends at the West Lexington Volunteer Fire Department, and helps with projects at the National Guard and Civitan Club.

## **Davie**



**Sandra Boyette** of Mocksville has found her match—combining a love of tennis with Special Olympics. Boyette has been a unified partner for Special Olympics for three years and is coaching Robb Williams in tennis

at the National Games this summer. The self-taught tennis enthusiast loves working with Special Olympics because the athletes are so happy and appreciative. Boyette believes that Special Olympics is rewarding for both the coaches and partners because the athletes stay in better physical condition and the coaches get so much more out of the program than they put into it. As the National Games approach, Boyette can't wait to meet people from across the nation and looks forward to good competition.



**Tiffany Smith**, 24, has competed in Special Olympics basketball, tennis and bowling since getting involved in high school. She will join Special Olympics Team NC this summer as a member of the tennis team and will compete in the tennis skills event.

Smith has competed at the state level at the SONC Fall Games, Summer Games and Basketball Tournament, but is excited to travel to Iowa for the National Games. A 2000 graduate of Davie High School, Smith says Venus and Serena Williams are her athletics role models and inspire her to try her best. Smith has worked at New Horizons Workshop in Mocksville for three years.



**Stacy Streit-Spry** of Mocksville is much more than an accomplished athlete for Special Olympics. Spry is married to Jackie Spry, a fellow athlete, and they have two children, Dylan and Savannah. When she's not participating in Special Olympics events, Streit-Spry loves to bowl with her husband, watch wrestling, volunteer in preschool activities year round and write short stories.

Streit-Spry's favorite Special Olympics memory was when she was chosen to compete in powerlifting at the first U.S. National Games and when she competed in equestrian at the 1999 World Games. While she was competing in the World Games, Streit-Spry got to meet her role model Kathy Ireland.

Streit-Spry was the 1998 Special Olympics North Carolina athlete of the year, has served on the SONC Board of Directors and is a Global Messenger. As accomplished as Streit-Spry is, she dreams of owning her own home and having a good job by age 35. Streit-Spry will compete in power lifting at the Special Olympics USA National Games in July.



**Timothy Troyer** of Mocksville is 18 years old and looking forward to competing in power lifting at the National Games this summer. Troyer has been active in Special Olympics for over five years and is a triple-medal winner in weight lifting.

As an athlete, Troyer has also participated in bowling, basketball and track and field and attended the State Games. When he's not participating in Special Olympics activities, Troyer enjoys watching television, bike riding and rollerblading. In the future Troyer hopes to work in auto care with his father because he is willing to work hard and learn new things.



**Robb Williams**, 32, is no stranger to competing on a large stage. He has traveled to the 1991, 1995 and 1999 Special Olympics World Games, as well as Southeast Region competitions in powerlifting and tennis. He will compete in Unified Mixed Doubles Tennis with his unified partner, Sandra Boyette, at the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games. Williams, a Mocksville resident, has been competing in Special Olympics for 26 years and says it is inspirational.

“I like to meet new people and travel,” Williams explains. “There is no other thrill like the one I get competing in the games.”

Williams is a 1992 graduate of North Iredell High School where he earned the Most Spirit Award for his senior class. He is a Special Olympics North Carolina Global Messenger, a former member of the athlete council and the 1992 SONC Athlete of the Year. Williams works for Budd Services at the Davie Family YMCA.

## Forsyth



**Franko Holifield**, 17, has only been involved in Special Olympics North Carolina competition for three years, but he has already won gold and silver in soccer, basketball and athletics at the state level. He is a member of the Special Olympics Team NC athletics team. Holifield, a Winston-Salem resident, is excited about traveling to Iowa this summer and says he enjoys Special Olympics events because they’re “cool and fun.”

Holifield loves music and dancing, and his coaches say he is a great dancer. He would love to work in a recording studio one day, but would settle for owning his own car wash. He is a drummer at Emmanuel Baptist Church where he also volunteers as a youth leader and Action Youth Missionary. Holifield was a member of the basketball team at Carter Vocational High School in Winston-Salem and cites Shaquille O’Neal as his favorite athlete.

## Randolph



**Debbie Barber** will be joining her husband as a coach of the Special Olympics Team NC basketball team. This experience will be especially rewarding for her because she will be coaching her daughter, Stephanie Claborn, and Stephanie’s teammates. Barber believes traveling to the National Games will be a wonderful learning experience for the herself and the athletes. She believes Special Olympics teaches the athletes there is so much they are able to accomplish in life.

“Special Olympics makes athletes feel empowered,” Barber states. “I’ve seen so many athletes become more confident, happier and more open verbally.”

Barber says she coaches because it gives her a chance to make a difference in a person's life and it is the most fulfilling thing she has ever done.



**Stephanie Claborn** is a member of the Special Olympics Team NC basketball team. She has competed at local and state level Special Olympics events over the past seven years in basketball, soccer, swimming and athletics. The 19-year-old Liberty resident has become more confident since her involvement with Special Olympics and no longer allows her mistakes to bring her down. Claborn's parents, Howard and Debra Barber, will coach the basketball team at the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games.

Claborn hopes to attend college after her 2006 graduation from Eastern High School in Ramseur. She loves animals and would like to be a vet. Claborn also enjoys dancing and has even choreographed some of her own routines. She plays the flute, volunteers at church dinner and with the local cub scouts.



**Bobby Gilmore** plays basketball every chance he gets, so he is very excited to be a member of the Special Olympics Team NC basketball team. The 18-year-old from Trinity says he has enjoyed every sport he has tried, but loves basketball above all others. His dream is to be a member of the UNC Men's basketball team.

Gilmore, a senior at New Hope Christian Academy in Thomasville, enjoys Special Olympics because he is able to play sports with his friends while having fun. His favorite Special Olympics memory is when he was on the Fox 8 sports news during a state volleyball tournament. Gilmore says Jake Delhomme is his favorite athlete and he likes to play on his Playstation and computer when he is not playing basketball.



**Vestal Hughes**, 23, will compete in aquatics at the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games. The Seagrove resident has competed for nine years in bowling and swimming at the local and state level. His coach, Louise Hancock, says Hughes is quiet and she can always count on him to be well behaved.

Hughes enjoys flying model airplanes and working in the work shop at Randolph Community College. He also enjoys NASCAR and says Greg Biffle in car #16 is his favorite sports figure. Hughes is a 2000 graduate of Southwestern High School in Asheboro.



**Amanda Mabe**, 25, will join the Special Olympics Team NC basketball team in competition at the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games. Mabe has been competing in Special Olympics for more than 15 years

and has already tried her hand at seven sports. Howard Barber, Mabe's coach, says she is versatile and can play almost any sport.

"Amanda's willingness to try and assist anyone who needs help, is a great asset to the team," Barber says.

Mabe has worked at the North Carolina Zoological Park in Asheville for ten years and in 2000 was named the N.C. Zoo Volunteer of the Year. She enjoys her time at the zoo and especially likes working around the chimpanzee exhibit. Mabe also volunteers her time visiting nursing homes and has donated her hair to Locks of Love. In the future, Mabe would like to work in law enforcement.



**Linda Needham** will serve as a bocce coach for Special Olympics Team NC. She has coached volleyball, bocce, basketball and soccer for 12 years. Needham says Special Olympics is the most rewarding thing she has ever done and loves being involved. Her favorite SONC memory is watching her son's basketball team play for the first time. Needham says the National Games will be a great experience for the athletes and offer the chance to compete above the state level. She also notes Iowa will be the furthest many of her athletes have traveled. Needham is an employee for the Asheboro City School System.



**Michael Todd Smith**, 32, has only been competing in Special Olympics North Carolina events for two years, but he is ready to compete at the 2006 Special Olympics USA National Games in Ames, IA. Smith will be a member of the Special Olympics Team NC basketball team. He has also competed at the state level in softball.

Smith's coach, Howard Barber, says Smith can get confused easily, but Special Olympics has helped him become more focused. Barber also cites Smith's great attitude and sense of humor as major assets to the team.

A resident of Asheboro, Smith enjoys sci-fi movies and admires Michael Jordan for his athletics ability. His dream is to be a comic book artist for Marvel comics.