

Kimela: A Wonderful Memory from the New Mexico Gymnastics
Community

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We wish to welcome all those who came today to bid a loving farewell to one of New Mexico's most dedicated, trustworthy, and knowledgeable teachers. Her contributions to the children in her school, our state, and to the entire gymnastics community will be cherished forever. She was indeed a sunbeam in the whole scheme of human nature. In fact, she might have been a whole volume of sunbeams. She helped so many young people for many years. Her impact and her life contributions will continue to be extremely contagious for many years to come.

We can recall Kimela as a young gymnast in the early days at the Albuquerque Gymnastics School. In fact, Joe Camacho and John Charzuk were part of her early gymnastics experience. We can recall her as a fine athlete back in the 70's and 80's. She was still a very fine athlete when she left us. In many respects, she was

a model of extreme fitness and extreme courage for as long as we knew her.

Kimela was indeed a free spirit and will continue to be one even as we speak. She had a strong sense of courage her whole life. She was indeed a risk taker. It was these characteristics that defined her. It was these characteristics that pushed her to begin her own school here in Los Lunas. She was one of the most creative, energetic and assertive coaches of our time. We were so lucky to have her involved in our sport.

Kimela always displayed a standard of care that was admired by others. She always displayed a unique empathy and safety for all her students. From the young beginner, to the Kandyce Silva, Kimela always gave equal attention. As a result, Kimela produced numerous state champions. Kimela was the spark that ignited the gymnastics community with some very fine athletes. Some of these individuals may be here today; Kandyce Silva, Alexis

McConnell and of course Sierra Bertholomey. Some of these girls were Regional, National, and NCAA athletes.

There are so many lessons that the gymnastics community has learned from having Kimela in its ranks. She displayed strong leadership for many young female coaches and athletes. She always displayed a positive vision for young children. She created so many opportunities for her athletes to learn and grow. She always shared her knowledge with other coaches, and has done so much for the New Mexico gymnastics community. The teachers, coaches, and judges will always be thankful for her involvement and creative input.

The news of losing Kimela must have been an extreme shock to the community of Los Lunas and to all her wonderful students. This loss must have felt like a beam routine with FIVE falls. What do you do now? Well, here's what you need to do... always remember the hope and courage that Kimela shared with you.

With these two qualities you can always get back up and finish with pride. This is what Kimela would want you to do. With the memory of Kimela and the hope she shared with you, you can succeed in many areas of life. Hope is indeed a very powerful tool. Hope is contagious. Hope can motivate you to do your very best. Hope is what Kimela was all about and is the personal gift she leaves behind for you to use as you grow.

Kimela's passing will leave a wide void in our state program. All the teachers, coaches, and judges will miss her greatly. We will always remember how she came face to face with her young athletes. She had a lovely way of communicating on the competitive floor. Her eye to eye contact was so powerful and honest. She never abandoned any athlete even when things were going very wrong. I noticed this so many times. Winning was far less important than a solid relationship with her students.

Kimela always kept her eye on the prize. (The child, the child, the child) It was always more important to develop trust and love than a 9.0 on bars. She knew in her heart that the total development of the child was far more important than beating some in-state rival. In reality, this should be a great lesson for all of us. Kimela's gifts to her students were always priceless. Our gymnastics community may never see another like her. How lucky we were to have her in our state program. She was a heart-felt gift to us all.

We are so sorry for this tremendous loss. Here's what she would say right now; "Honey- get back up and finish with pride." Oh! And she always had a hug when you were done: hugs can last forever...

Love,
John