



# USA WRESTLING



USA WRESTLING / / WRESTLING GIANT BILL FARRELL, 82, PASSED AWAY TODAY ON LONG ISLAND, N.Y.


CONNECT WITH **TEAM USA** Like us 

## Wrestling giant Bill Farrell, 82, passed away today on Long Island, N.Y.

Like  Tweet 

[Print](#)

BY GARY ABBOTT USA WRESTLING | JUNE 09, 2012, 8:10 P.M. (ET)

 Bill Farrell of Centre Island, N.Y., 82, passed away today in hospice at the North Shore Hospital on Long Island.

Farrell was a true visionary and leader who made a major impact on wrestling at all levels.

He was the head coach of the famous 1972 U.S. Olympic freestyle wrestling team, which included Olympic champions Dan Gable, Wayne Wells and Ben Peterson. He was an athlete, coach and administrator for the New York Athletic Club, one of the greatest wrestling clubs in the entire world. He was also the top wrestling executive for ASICS America, helping build and expand its wrestling business to become the leading company for wrestling shoes and products in the world.

"Our sport lost an icon today, someone who was truly personally responsible for the development and growth of wrestling worldwide" said USA Wrestling Executive Director Rich Bender. "We truly celebrate Bill's involvement and leadership in wrestling. His legacy will last forever."

"Personally, my only adult livelihood has been working with and around Bill Farrell. He is an inspiration in my life. I learned from him and grew with him" said Nick Gallo of ASICS America and TW Promotions. "Bill was an innovator from the time he sold his first shoe. He inspired people in so many ways. He got us all to do what nobody else could do. He was truly a master motivator. A big chapter of my life ended today."

Those who knew and loved Bill are asked to please not try to contact the immediate family at this time and respect their desire for privacy. There will be a memorial planned for Bill Farrell, and information will be posted and promoted as soon as it has been finalized.

For someone who did not wrestle in high school or college, he made a lifetime of the sport after joining the New York Athletic Club as a young adult. At "the club" he did it all, competing, coaching, and serving as an administrator. He also served as the President of the New York Athletic Club, responsible for all activities of the world-famous club.

He may be most remembered for his coaching of the 1972 Olympic freestyle team, which competed in Munich, West Germany. The U.S. team had one of the greatest performances in American wrestling history, with six medalists. Joining gold medalists Gable, Wells and Ben Peterson, the other medalists were silver medalists Rick Sanders and John Peterson and bronze medalist Chris Taylor.

Farrell was pleased with the success of the 1972 team, but as in everything else in his life, he was not satisfied because of his high goals and belief in his team. Farrell wrote the following in Amateur Wrestling News shortly after the 1972 Olympics.

"To say that I am pleased with the performance of our Freestyle wrestling team would be the mildest way of stating my position. With few exceptions I believe that everyone is very elated with the results of 1972. One should be satisfied with



six medals, but after you have won six, it is very easy to visualize the winning of at least two more" wrote Farrell.

His work with ASICS, the industry leader within wrestling, has changed the sport of wrestling and helped it to grow and develop. ASICS is a long-time sponsor for USA Wrestling, which has helped the American wrestling program reach great achievements at all levels.

In addition to his induction to the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, Farrell was also inducted into the Helms Hall of Fame, the Sporting Goods Industry Hall of Fame, the O'Dea High School Hall of Fame and many others. He was named Man of the Year for wrestling, received a Lifetime Service Award from USA Wrestling, as well as numerous other major recognitions.

It would take a book to document all of the ways that Bill Farrell impacted wrestling and those involved in the sport. We will post a few of his biographies below, and promise to share more about this amazing and wonderful man.

#### **Bill Farrell's Wrestling Hall of Fame biography**

Without benefit of high school or collegiate wrestling, Bill Farrell enjoyed a substantial career as a wrestler and coach for the New York Athletic Club. But it was as World team and Olympic coach that he led his country to its best performance in nearly half a century.

Farrell took over the national freestyle team in the late 1960s, when it needed his organization and management skills, as well as his coaching. He was known for his ability to blend individuals with diverse personalities and techniques, obtaining maximum effort from each without conflict. His knowledge of the international scoring system short-circuited Iron Curtain "deals" at least twice, saving U. S. gold medals.

Farrell's 1969 team placed second in the World, the highest U. S. finish to that time, with Rick Sanders and Fred Fozzard winning our first two gold medals. All 10 wrestlers placed in the top six. A year later, the U. S. placed second, with Wayne Wells as champ among five medalists.

In the 1972 Olympic Games, Farrell guided the Americans to an unexpected six medals ... gold for Wells, Dan Gable and Ben Peterson, silver for Sanders and John Peterson, and bronze for huge Chris Taylor.

As a wrestler, Bill chalked up more than 300 victories, gaining All-America stature, winning the Canadian nationals and placing sixth in the 1962 Worlds. He was NYAC coach from 1960 through 1972.

When Farrell began selling wrestling shoes out of the trunk of his car in the late 1950s, it was the start of one of the nation's largest sport and physical fitness equipment firms. His company has supplied equipment and financial support to U. S. teams for three decades.

He was secretary of the Olympic wrestling committee and president of the New York AC. And he was the first "Marlboro Man" when an advertising agency built its campaign around rugged-looking individuals.

For bringing new concepts to national wrestling programs and for showing the way to international success, William P. Farrell is honored as a Distinguished Member of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

#### **TW Promotions Founder William Farrell - (Retired 2008)**

Bill became one of the most successful freestyle wrestlers ever to come from Long Island, in spite of the fact that he did not actually start the sport until he was 26, having concentrated on football in his earlier years. He was introduced to wrestling while attending matches at Hofstra University, and later while working out at the Omaha YMCA. He was able to dominate his local workout partners until one day a new athlete came in and gave Bill a wrestling lesson he never forgot. It was such a beating that Bill avoided this wrestler for the next several weeks. His desire to become good at the sport led him to return to workout with this gentleman, who was in fact Glenn Brand, a former Olympic Gold Medalist in 1948. With Glenn's help, and with the assistance and financial support of the very successful New York Athletic Club, he went on to become an All American, winning numerous local, regional and national titles.

Bill eventually became the coach of the team, and continued competing until he finally ended his storied amateur career at the age of 38. During his time as a wrestler and coach, the NYAC wrestling team won 11 National AAU and USA Wrestling National team titles, as well as producing countless National Champions and All Americans. It was the premier club team of its time.

As the head coach of the USA Freestyle Wrestling team, which competed in Munich, Germany, in 1972, Bill guided his squad to 6 medals, the most in history up to that time. His Gold medalists were Dan Gable, Wayne Wells and Ben Peterson. John Peterson and Rick Sanders earned Silver medals, and the "gentle giant", 450 lb. Chris Taylor took home the Bronze. Some historians have said it was the greatest international wrestling performance in US history. Bill was inducted into the Wrestling Hall of Fame in Stillwater, Oklahoma as a Distinguished Member in 1985 for his outstanding contributions and achievements in the sport.

Bill lives on Centre Island on the north shore of Long Island with his wife Lorraine, and children Leigh and Kyle. He enjoys organic gardening, kayaking, swimming and weight lifting in his spare time.

#### **Sporting Goods Industry Hall of Fame biography for Bill Farrell of Asics America and T.W. Promotions**

Bill Farrell, the previous chief administrator for the ASICS wrestling division, retired in 2009 after an illustrious career with the brand spanning 50 full years. Farrell joined ASICS in 1958 as an importer and distributor of the first "Tiger" wrestling shoes in the United States. In 1959, with Onitsuka Tiger and RESILITE, Farrell started his first company, Olympic RESILITE, which continued to distribute ASICS products as well as a variety of wrestling products. Almost 30 years later, 1988, he created TW Promotions, Inc. which is currently the wrestling marketing arm of the ASICS America Corporation.

Bill Farrell has been characterized as a non-stop force within the Asics family and wrestling community. Bill started his career with Asics in 1958 when the brand was just making a name for itself in Japan, and with his help, the Onitsuka Tiger brand was introduced into the U.S. market. He tirelessly worked on behalf of the brand - and eventually Asics - until it became the No. 1 wrestling shoe.

He is a legend in the wrestling community. In addition to competing internationally, Farrell took on the responsibility of coaching the New York Athletic Club wrestling team to 11 national AAU titles and several USA Wrestling national team titles. He coached the U.S. freestyle wrestling team to six medals at the 1972 Games in Munich. He also found time to serve as strength and conditioning coach for Vince Lombardi in Green Bay and Washington.

In 1959, with Onitsuka Tiger and Resilite, Farrell started his first company, Olympic Resilite, which distributed a variety of wrestling products. He also purchased the company that sold the Universal Gym. Then, in 1988, Farrell turned his attention to the wrestling division, which marked the beginning of TW Promotions, Inc. Since 1988, TW Promotions has been the wrestling arm of Asics America Corporation. Bill was inducted into the Wrestling Hall of Fame in 1985 as a Distinguished Member for his contributions to the sport.

#### O'Dea High School, Seattle, Wash. Hall of Fame biography for William Farrell, Class of 1947

William Farrell lettered in football at O'Dea and went on to a career as an Olympic-medal-winning wrestling coach and National Wrestling Champion. He attended Ventura College (CA), St. John's and Hofstra Universities, and later went on to compete in wrestling for the New York Athletic Club from 1956-1968, where he compiled a 335-10-4 record. He was an alternate for the Pan Am Games in 1959 and an alternate for the U.S. Olympic team in 1960. He was a National Champion in 1962 and placed sixth at the World Championships. Farrell served as U.S. National Team Coach for four years, leading his team to a second place finish at the World Championships. He was also the freestyle coach at the 1972 Olympics, winning six medals. Farrell was named Wrestling Man of the Year in 1973, and is a member of both the Helm Hall of Fame and the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. He is the founder of Universal Fitness Products.

#### Editor's Note

Bill Farrell is a dear personal friend, mentor and inspiration to me, and I already miss him. Bill Farrell was one of those leaders who helped people like me who have committed our professional lives to the sport of wrestling to strive for excellence in all that we do. Bill had a tremendously sharp mind, an incredible sense of humor, and a commanding presence at all times. Bill will continue to be with me as I move forward in my life. He truly made a difference to me and to everybody who was blessed to call him friend and mentor.

- Gary Abbott

## Comments

0 Comments

Sort by



Add a comment...

 Facebook Comments Plugin

Media

[About Us](#)  
[Sponsors](#)  
[Merchandise](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)

©2016 United States Olympic Committee. All f