



Our Memories of John Grimek

by Pudgy & Les Stockton

One time long ago—long before we had ever seen John Grimek in person—our friend, Bruce Conner, was discussing with Les and I the “aura” that seemed to flow from some people. Bruce thought this came especially from some of the people whose photos he studied in his strength magazines, which featured photos of the well developed, beautiful bodies possessed by the men who were gracing the pages.

I was new to this idea, but often thought about it and wondered about it. Then one night in the old upstairs Vic Tanny gym on 2nd Street in Santa Monica, I began to really understand what Bruce felt. There in front of us was our most favorite bodybuilder. He had come to California from York, Pennsylvania and to us it was a dream come true to see the great John Grimek standing under the lights on a wooden platform. We were all completely enthralled. Of course we had seen muscle poses displayed by other men who occasionally put on exhibitions but nothing like this wonderful, graceful, beautiful man. He had huge muscles, but he was also amazingly flexible, and suddenly I knew what it meant to see with my own eyes a physique that awed me—a living

picture of beauty, an unmistakable “aura.” That was what Bruce meant, and even though I saw John pose many times after that and also saw many other outstanding physiques, I never forgot that special “aura” surrounding John when I first saw him pose. He was a special one.

As I came to know John as a friend over the years he always remained in a special niche far above the others of his day and time. He was a wonderful man who inspired a 19-year-old girl who had only seen him in photos in the magazines. I was just a fledgling but John inspired me to become a life-long participant in physical culture and to persevere in the early days with other women who loved to exercise and use their muscles.

Whenever John was in Southern California over the years he was always fun to be around. Les and I cherish our times with him. Though he is gone now, his place in our small world of dreams will always be surrounded by that wonderful “aura.” He was a person who didn’t disappoint us when he first stepped out of his pictures—he was a real live dream come true.

—Abbye “Pudgy” Stockton



Our memories of John Grimek are so special, we cannot convey in words the inspiration, respect and sheer unbounded admiration we have for this man, who so positively influenced the beginnings of our own physical advancement. His influence resulted in the acclaim that Pudgy has received as being instrumental in the women’s world. Each in his or her own way, John and Pudgy helped people to recognize that physical activity is the basis of *everyone’s* personal well being and the key to a fulfilling life!

I, Les, “Mr. Pudgy,” want you to know that after Pudgy had been inspired by John, she became a pioneer in women’s bodybuilding and weightlifting, for which she received trophies and accolades in recognition for her activities. However, when asked which award was the best she ever received, she is always quick to answer, “After Mr. America Steve Stanko saw me perform for the first time, he said, “Pudgy is the female John Grimek!” She went on to say that, “This was the greatest compliment I could ever receive and I cherish it as my greatest memory.”

John, as two of your many, devoted disciples, we can only say that you will live in our hearts forever!

—Les Stockton



THE KING AND QUEEN OF MUSCLEDOM. PUDGY STOCKTON APPEARS WITH JOHN GRIMEK ON THE COVER OF *MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT* IN FEBRUARY 1967. WHEN THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S BODYBUILDING IS WRITTEN, STOCKTON WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE COMPARED TO GRIMEK. BOTH STOCKTON AND GRIMEK WERE PIONEERS WHO HELPED ESTABLISH THEIR SPORT, BOTH ENJOYED GREAT POPULARITY WITH IRON GAMERS AS WELL AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC, BOTH HELPED BODYBUILDING GAIN PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE, AND BOTH POSSESSED PHYSIQUES WHICH WERE DRAMATIC AND GRACEFUL. PUDGY EXUDED FEMININITY AND JOHN WAS THE QUINTESSENCE OF MASCULINITY.