

SHEILA BURRELL

A New Mexico athlete without parallel, Sheila Burrell has shown her focus and determination in competition with some of the world's greatest athletes. At 34 years of age, her athletic career has spanned almost three decades and shows that perseverance brings about the longevity to make attending two Olympics possible.

Her athletic career is brimming with a myriad of records. The highlights begin with her performance at Rio Grande High School. She was All-State in three sports (volleyball, basketball, and track) and was the State Champion in the 100, 200, 400, long jump, and high jump her senior year. She graduated from UCLA with a double major (English/American Studies and History) in 1995. She was a 1995 All-American, fourth in the heptathlon, and fourth in the 4 X 400 relay at the NCAA finals.

Sheila's US and International heptathlon career highlights include a 1998 seventh at the Goodwill Games, a 1999 first at the US Championships, and eleventh at the World Championships. In the 2000 Olympics she suffered a knee strain on her first high jump and did not score points by no-heighting. She was able to continue competing and finished 26th in spite of her injury. In 2001 she won the bronze medal at the World Championships and followed that by winning the gold medal at the US Championships in 2002. She successfully defended her title at the US Championships in 2003. Sheila won the US Olympic Trials in 2004 and placed fourth in the 2004 Olympics (competing with a stress fracture in her right foot).

This athlete has not only given to sports but has returned support and service to the community through motivational speaking and impacted others with her optimistic outlook as an instructor. She is currently based at the Olympic Training Center in San Diego and returns to Albuquerque to visit her mother Glendora, her grandparents, and her extended family. Sheila is a respected competitor whose sense of character has driven her to attain lofty goals. Her humble countenance and spirituality also make her the ultimate example of a Hall of Fame inductee.