

Thomas "Tom" Young: The Architect of Fitness in New Mexico

Tom Young is a monumental figure whose pioneering spirit and tireless dedication have profoundly shaped the landscape of health and fitness in New Mexico and beyond. His athletic prowess, entrepreneurial vision, and unwavering commitment to community well-being have brought extraordinary honor to the State of New Mexico, making him an undeniable candidate for Hall of Fame induction.

Sports Involved: Weightlifting, Fitness, Health Club Industry

Outstanding Achievements and Accomplishments in Athletics/Sports:

Tom Young's legacy is deeply rooted in his exceptional accomplishments in weightlifting and his transformative impact on the fitness industry.

- **Dominant Competitive Weightlifter and Record Holder:** Tom Young's name is synonymous with competitive excellence in weightlifting.
 - **Multiple "Mr. New Mexico" Titles:** He earned the coveted "Mr. New Mexico" title multiple times for fitness, showcasing his supreme physical conditioning and dedication.
 - **Enduring Weightlifting Records:** Remarkably, over 50 years later, Tom Young still holds numerous state weightlifting records, including in events such as the Clean & Jerk and Deadlift. These records stand as a testament to his extraordinary strength and skill, a standard of excellence that has yet to be surpassed in half a century.
- **Pioneer of the Modern Fitness Movement in New Mexico (Movement began in 1954):** Tom Young was not merely an athlete; he was a visionary who revolutionized how New Mexicans approached health and wellness. His influence began in 1954 and continues to this day.
- **Entrepreneurial Acumen and Industry Leadership:** Tom Young's entrepreneurial spirit led to the creation of a fitness empire that profoundly impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands.
 - **Tom Young's Fitness Centers (Owned and Operated 54 Health Clubs):** He owned and operated an astounding 54 health clubs across New Mexico and Arizona, a network that served over 500,000 members. This massive undertaking made fitness accessible on an unprecedented scale within the region.
 - **Co-Creator of 24 Hour Fitness:** Notably, Tom Young was instrumental in the creation of what would become the widely recognized 24 Hour Fitness chain, partnering with Ray Wilson. His foundational work helped establish a model for widespread fitness accessibility that influenced the national industry.
- **Groundbreaking in Fitness Education:** Recognizing the need for qualified professionals, Tom Young established a vital cornerstone of fitness education.
 - **First Personal Training School in New Mexico (1987):** In 1987, he opened the first personal training school in New Mexico, a pioneering initiative that set the standard for professional fitness instruction in the state.

- **Mentor to Thousands of Fitness Professionals:** Through his school and ongoing efforts, he has trained thousands of athletes who went on to become successful fitness professionals. He continues to train up-and-coming personal trainers in weightlifting, ensuring his knowledge and passion are passed to the next generation.
- **Literary Contributions to Fitness:** Tom Young, alongside his wife Connie, further disseminated fitness knowledge through published works.
 - **Authored Two Fitness Books with Connie Young:** Their collaborative efforts produced two significant books on fitness, sharing their expertise with a broader audience.
 - **Connie Young's Pioneering Work:** It is also noteworthy that his wife, Connie Young, published what is recognized as the first known book on Aerobics in 1959, further solidifying the family's foundational role in the fitness world.

Professional Jobs and Accomplishments:

- **Tom Young's Fitness Centers:**
 - Established and operated 54 fitness centers across New Mexico and Arizona.
 - Amassed 500,000 members within his fitness club chain.
- **Co-Creator of 24 Hour Fitness (with Ray Wilson).**
- Authored multiple fitness books.
- Founded the first personal training school in New Mexico (1987).
- Trained thousands of personal trainers.

Honors:

- **Mr. New Mexico (Multiple Years):** Recognized for his exceptional physique and fitness.
- **Holds Numerous Enduring Weightlifting Records (for over 50 years):** Including in events like the Clean & Jerk and Deadlift.

Community Involvement:

- **Decades of Community Engagement at Schools and Colleges:** Tom Young has dedicated countless years to community involvement, speaking at schools and colleges across New Mexico about the importance of fitness and health.
- **Extensive Public Outreach:** He has spent many years educating the public, emphasizing the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
- **Numerous Magazine Articles:** Contributed dozens of magazine articles, further amplifying his message on fitness and well-being.
- **Judge in Fitness Competitions (Over 60 Years):** His expertise and experience have been sought after for over six decades as a judge in fitness competitions.

Family:

Tom Young's dedication to fitness was a family affair. His wife, Connie Young, was an integral partner, not only helping him run the fitness clubs but also publishing the first known book on Aerobics in 1959, demonstrating their shared commitment to promoting health. Together, they have a large and loving family, including 10 children, dozens of grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren.

Additional Comments:

Tom Young's influence extends far beyond mere statistics. His unwavering passion and commitment have served as a profound inspiration to almost every fitness professional and enthusiast in New Mexico, Arizona, and California. His movement, which began in 1954, laid the groundwork for modern fitness culture and continues to resonate today. At 93, having lived in Santa Fe for most of his life, Tom Young remains a testament to the power of a life dedicated to health and fitness, a true legend whose contributions merit extraordinary recognition in the Hall of Fame.