

This full-page advertisement appeared in *Sports Illustrated* upon the book's release. Bill Pearl, Eleanor and Bill Curry, Judy Gedney, Sam Loprinzi, and Doris Barrilleaux were also featured in the book.

## TERRY'S STORY

BY TERRY TODD

*Lift Your Way to Youthful Fitness*,  
(Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1985), 11-15.

*Preface: In 1985, Terry and I co-authored Lift Your Way to Youthful Fitness for the Little-Brown Publishing Company of Boston. The book was listed as "A Sports Illustrated Book," and I clearly remember the excitement we felt when we saw a full-page ad for it in Sports Illustrated magazine. Terry and I were both proud of Lift, as it broke new ground in several ways. It was the first book to describe how to use periodization theory for general fitness training; it described how weight training was being used to fight aging by Bulgarian scientists; and, it included the results of two research studies we ran at Auburn University in which middle-aged men and women trained with weights and got remarkable results. Terry and I worked on different parts of the book, although we both read and edited each other's drafts throughout the project. This autobiographical chapter was written entirely by Terry. I've included it as it explains his training and athletic life prior to 1985. He was 47 at the time the book was published. ~ Jan Todd*



In the early sixties, John F. Kennedy created the President's Council on Physical Fitness, and Americans in increasingly large numbers began jogging, playing handball and tennis, spreading by word of mouth how much their new exercise program had improved the way they looked and felt. But even before those early years, I was involved in what almost everyone then considered a waste of time. I was a weightlifter. But my first athletic love was tennis.

From the time I was about thirteen until I was a sophomore in college, I spent the major part of my springs, summers, and falls on the



**Terry at age five. Baseball was Terry's first sport and when Little League began in Austin in 1950, he signed up to play and his father helped coach the team. Terry stopped playing baseball when he got serious about tennis.**

courts. Throughout my high-school years I played on the tennis team, playing well enough to go to the state tournament, and upon graduation I went to the University of Texas in Austin and managed to earn the number-one spot on the freshman team. During my senior year in high school, I'd reached my full 6 feet 2 inches in height, and I starved myself so that I stayed around 185 pounds. I wanted to look just like a tennis player was supposed to look, and though my big frame was pretty spare back then, I had an image to maintain. The summer before I entered the University of Texas, however, I took a break from tennis and decided to begin doing a bit of



dumbbell training for my left arm, which, to me, was embarrassingly small in size compared to my right. One of my friends trained with me that summer, and what had started as work for one arm gradually became a full routine as I found both the increased strength and the increased size interesting. I gained 30 to 35 pounds that summer but during my freshman year I played better tennis than ever, finding the additional strength and quickness that the weights produced an

asset to my game, not a hindrance. I lettered my sophomore year and continued to lift and get bigger, reaching 230 or so that spring. In the fall of my junior year I won the team tournament at a weight of 245 pounds, and though my game was still improving, I looked like anything but a tennis player.



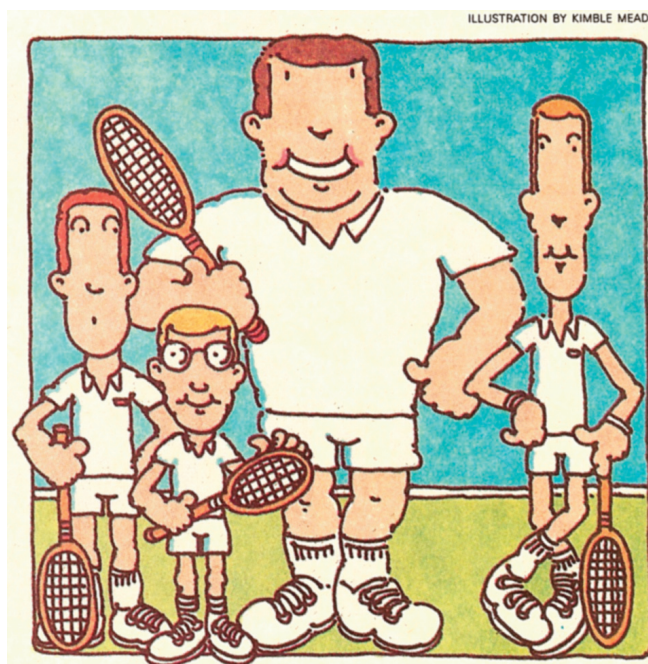
**Terry began weight training just after his graduation from high school in 1956. When he entered The University of Texas that fall, his lanky tennis frame had begun to fill out with muscle—a fact that caused his tennis coaches much consternation.**



**Terry in his Travis High letter jacket during his senior year in high school. He had not yet started lifting.**

That was the late fifties, remember, before weight training became a part of the football conditioning programs, and in my junior year, I was larger than all but two of the linemen at UT, and, naturally, my new tennis coach took some ribbing about my size. However, my first college

coach, Dr. Daniel Penick, actually seemed to like my size. He was eighty-seven years old when he retired and his eyesight was failing him a bit, but I remember him calling me over one day to the bench, where he sat in the sun watching the team. “Todd,” he said, “you’re my favorite player.” I was shocked, and I managed to mumble my thanks before he went on to say, “Yes, you’re my favorite. I can’t tell the other men apart very well now if they’re very far away, but you, Todd, you have a very distinctive silhouette.” But my new coach liked neither my size nor the ribbing. Finally, he gave me an ultimatum—lose weight or lose your scholarship—despite the way I was playing. The implication was also clear—stop lifting weights. The unfairness of this rankled, and so I just quit, spending my last year and a half as an undergraduate con-



**Terry wrote a short article about his contentious relationship with his tennis coaches at UT-Austin that appeared in *Sports Illustrated* on 16 May 1983 (“Nostalgia: A Tennis Coach of Classic Stature Praised the Author’s Unique Form,” pp. 102-103). Kimble Mead’s illustration graced the story.**

centrating on the barbells.

When I was no longer putting in the hours of regular practice on the sunny Texas courts, I not only had more time but more energy for the lifting. My strength increased dramatically, as did my size. For the next several years, as I finished up undergraduate work and began my graduate work on the history of sports, I lived the ideal athlete’s life. I ate at my mother’s bounteous table, and though I was, of course, interested in my research and





Once he quit tennis and trained for strength, Terry quickly gained weight. He's shown here at the end of a workout in the early 1960s with his first training partner, Danny Hodnett, on the left; Queenie, his bullmastiff, who often went to the gym; and an unidentified friend. Queenie was the first of 22 bullmastiffs or English mastiffs he/we would own.

course work, I was able to focus a major part of each day on my training, spending long hours in the gym. In three years' time, I weighed over 300 pounds and I won my first National Championship, in Olympic lifting. At about the same time, a new sort of lifting competition was being organized, called powerlifting, and I fell in love with it.

Unlike the Olympic lifts, which require great speed, flexibility, and considerable technique, the powerlifts—squat, bench press, and deadlift—require mainly brute strength. The people at the York Barbell Club decided to hold a national-level meet—the first ever, in the summer of 1964—and I began to train with renewed interest, for though I enjoyed Olympic lifting, I began it too late to develop the flexibility in my hips and shoulders needed to reach the highest levels internationally.

Powerlifting came along at a convenient time, and I participated in the superheavyweight division of that first big meet, winning and outdistancing the man in the weight class below by 375 pounds. I “totaled” (squat plus bench plus deadlift) over 1600 pounds in the three lifts that year

and went on to become the first man to break the barriers at 1700, 1800, and 1900 pounds officially over the next few years of my competitive career. At my peak I weighed 340 pounds and I measured 61 inches around my chest, 36 inches around my thighs, 22 inches around my biceps, 46 inches around the waist, and 17 inches in the forearm. My personal bests in the powerlifts (in the gym) although they are well behind the best of today, were 800 in the squat, 525 in the bench press, and 800 in the deadlift. I was a big, strong lad. But the critical thing here is not how large or strong I was but how unbelievably different I was from the bony high-school senior who was unable to chin himself even once. The photographs shown here tell part of the story but only part; they don't explain the fact that even though I had gained 150 pounds, I could leap higher into the air than I could before I began lifting, or the fact that at 340 pounds, I could chin myself fifteen times. To me, and to many who saw the changes, the transformation did seem almost miraculous. And the trip back down was no less exciting.

In 1967, having been at or near the top for four years, and having set fifteen records in powerlifting, I finally finished my Ph.D. and took a job teaching at Auburn University in Alabama. I decided then to concentrate my energies on teaching and academic work - not on barbells and beefsteak - and so I began to cut back on both my training and my eating. No more bent-forward rowing



Terry won the first AAU Men's Senior National Powerlifting Championships in 1965 with lifts of 675 in the squat, 475 in the bench press, and a 740-pound world-record deadlift. His 1890-pound total was also a world record. Wilber Miller on the left took third place, and Gene Roberson, right, placed second.





Terry returned to tennis after retiring from powerlifting and is shown here in 1968—still bigger and more muscular than a “normal” tennis player. At Auburn University, where he was then teaching, he even began playing in tennis tournaments again.

with 500 pounds, no more size 60 suits and two pounds of steak at a sitting. Within a year I dropped 90 pounds, down to 250, through a combination of diet, tennis, and a reduced and radically altered weight-training program. Since that time, almost twenty years ago, I have continued to train regularly for fitness and health purposes. Rather than being the means to the end of competition, weights have become the means to another end—fitness and the maintenance of strength and vigor.

I left Auburn in 1969 and moved to Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where Jan and I married in 1973, and during those years in Macon, I played tennis regularly but I still managed to get to the gym a couple of times each week



When Terry joined the faculty at Mercer University in 1969, there were no barbells on campus. A lifting fan donated a set in his honor, but with such limited equipment, Terry chose, instead, to train at Macon’s European Health Spa until we married in 1973. The Spa did not allow men and women to train together, however, so when I wanted to train with him we moved to a gym called Powerbuilders where I was the only female member.



Although Terry never competed again after his retirement, he did return to heavy training on several occasions as he was working with athletes like Canadian powerlifting champion Terry Young. He continued to include heavy partial deadlifts in his workouts for many years as he believed they were a great way to stress the whole body. He’s in his mid-forties in this photo.

for thirty to forty-five minutes. I found even during the winters, when I would go for months without playing tennis, that as long as I trained, my weight stayed roughly at 250, and the quickness and flexibility of my body remained fairly constant. My routine takes very little time from the rest of my life, yet still allows me to continue to retain the musculature and power of a much younger man, to eat almost as much as I wish, to sleep well, and to have excellent health and energy. For the past eighteen years I have spent an average of no more than an hour or so a week lifting weights, yet this hour, along with a little seasonal tennis or squash and the odd day of wood splitting, has allowed me to feel terrific and to maintain, at forty-seven, the physical characteristics of a twenty-year-old athlete and the health of your average horse. I could train harder, I know. Jan often rags me about it—but I’ll be satisfied to hold my own for a while yet and not have to become a slave to the gym or the running track to do it.

Through the years, I’ve been able to use weight training to produce a variety of effects on, and to exercise control over, my body. As a teenager I used the weights to gain weight and to improve my performance in tennis; in grad school I used them to gain more mass and size and so became a competitive lifter; after retiring, I used them to lose that great body weight, and for the past eighteen years I’ve used them to maintain my health, fitness, and appearance. Properly done, weights can work magic. I know.

