



JOHN GRIMEK TOOK MOST OF HIS OWN PHYSIQUE PHOTOGRAPHS USING A SELF-TIMER ON HIS CAMERA. EVEN WHEN RELAXED, THE BODY HE CREATED INSPIRES AWE AND RESPECT.

I'm sure that most of us can remember when the American Medical Association condemned the idea of weight training. To most doctors, not so long ago, anyone who trained with weights was thought to be a total lunatic.

Today, with close to twenty-five million members enrolled in health clubs in the United States, the fitness industry is a mega-billion dollar business, and the attitude of the A.M.A. has been shifted into reverse. They now talk of nothing but positive benefits

Tribute to a Titan

Tom Minichiello

from weight training. Today, you'll see senior citizens, male and female, business executives, and yes, doctors also—people from every walk of life passing through the doors of the local gyms. No matter what the sport, today all athletes have weight training in their routines, a total reversal of yesterday. Some of today's best equipped gyms are located in hospitals—they call them "Wellness Centers."

It has taken a few decades for this acceptance of weight training into the American way of life. How did this turn-a-round come about? Who were the individuals responsible for bringing to light the many benefits of weight training?

This past November 20, 1998, we lost one of the iron game's most influential individuals. During his long lifetime he inspired millions of young men the world over (myself included) to seek strength and health through the use of weight training. John C. Grimek was and will remain a giant in the physical culture community.

Certainly, Grimek's influence on so many people contributed significantly to the total turn-around by the A.M.A. and the acceptance of weight training by coaches in all sports and by the overall public.

It was not only John Grimek's magnificent physique and his art at displaying his body that influenced generations of men . . . it was also his ability to excel in other sports as well. He was a great weightlifter, representing the United States in the Olympic Games. He was also a talented strongman, and he was great at hand balancing and tumbling. What's more, he was a fine swimmer, and he had fantastic ability at muscle control and unbelievable flexibility even though his body was the most massively muscled of his day. In short, he embodied



GRIMEK CALLED THIS POSE "SUN-BRONZED" FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.

qualities that would immediately eliminate any fairytale of the so-called musclebound weightlifter.

John Grimek exerted enormous influence as he displayed his athletic talents at YMCAs and schools throughout the country. His writings for *Strength & Health* and *Muscular Development* magazines became an encyclopedia of information to all who wanted to seek improved health and strength. He was a man who was doubly gifted. He backed up his strength and athletic ability with a vast knowledge of weight training and he passed this on to millions of people worldwide.

I was fortunate to see the John Terlazzo show at New York's Carnegie Hall in 1949. I had seen competitions before this at the Roosevelt Auditorium and many of the YMCAs in the New York area, and I first thought it odd to have a physique and strongman exhibition at a location noted mainly for its involvement in the world of music.

In any case, it was truly a great show, with strongmen lifting and the bodybuilders competing. The highlight of the evening came when John Grimek gave his posing exhibition. After his display of muscle control and presenting his physique in a posing routine that would have certainly excited Michelangelo himself, John Grimek proved to anyone watching that he belonged on that celebrated stage of Carnegie Hall.

Seeing John Grimek's posing demonstration was music . . . not to the ear, but to the eyes.

Years later, my wife Eleanore and I became friends with John and his wife, Angela. We worked together at many of the AAU Mr. America competitions throughout the country. After knowing him, I was truly more impressed with him than before. Whenever anyone would approach John Grimek for his autograph or to ask a question on training, he would always, always accommodate the individual, and he did it enthusiastically. He was a gentleman to everyone. Those of us who were fortunate enough to know Grimek would know that along with his awesome physique, he gave us his marvelous "personality."

Earlier in this short piece, I was inaccurate when I said that we recently "lost" John C. Grimek. It would be more accurate to say that his presence will be forever felt in every gym, and on every posing platform. His name is carved into the history books of physical fitness and athletics and his accomplishments and deeds will be studied and honored by future generations of students of the iron game.

As he takes his rightful place in the pantheon, we are all better for having his influence on our lives. John C. Grimek will always live at the pinnacle of iron game history.