



Felicia’s follow up

PART ONE OF THREE

If the name Felicia Guliford doesn’t stir any memories for some readers, chances are that they haven’t been in New Mexico for very long or that they are totally disinterested in sports of any kind. For the rest of us that have been here a while and try to keep up with what is happening in our small town, she is one of a kind.

There are other athletes from Gallup who have competed well in college, but none come to mind that have even been close to producing the history that Felicia has, in both high school and Division I college. Let me briefly list her high school accomplishments, just for starters. I must fudge a little on this list, but only because Felicia began to be noticed in the eighth grade.

That was the year when she helped her cross-country Bengal team win the state title, though she only finished second individually. She made up for that in the spring when she won the 1600m and 3200m, and also was on the winning Medley Relay team for the Gallup High track and field team.

‘God’s blessing’

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
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By her freshman year in high school, she had settled into an unvarying slate of races, and wins: her cross-country team won first, led by her four straight individual wins; and she took firsts in the 800, 1600, and 3200-meter races, every year. Twenty-four state championship titles for the years 1997-2002. She was selected as a 3-time All-American and still holds the New Mexico records in the 1600 and 3200-meter races. With a history like that, it surprised no one that the University of Tennessee offered her a full-ride scholarship for their program. All of Felicia’s hard work was paying off for her. She called it “God’s blessing” for giving her a strong mind and body. All she took credit for was following up with the hard work necessary to sustain it.

As much as Felicia likes to run and compete, her belief and faith in God remains steadfast and most important in her life.

At the University of Tennessee, Felicia continued with the same effort necessary in everything she did. A double Major – Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and Spanish – did not deter her from earning a 3.73 GPA in the first and a 4.0 in the latter, and in 2007 she graduated Magna Cum Laude. She was also honored as a South Eastern Region Academic All-American from 2003-07 and was one of the top nine finalists for the NCAA Woman of the Year based on merit, community service, academic, and athletic achievement. You may have seen the life-size poster in Starbucks at Sammy C’s Rock ‘n Sports Pub and Grille.

Felicia was honored additionally as the University of Tennessee Student-Athlete of the Year, earned the Lady Vol Community Service Award, and awarded the Brad Davis SEC Community Service Postgraduate Scholarship, all in 2007.

During her five years at Tennessee, she was elected as the co-captain for three years in the Track and Field program and was named the Most Improved Indoor runner in 2005 when she became the Individual SEC Champion in the 3K and 5K. Her team won the Indoor Team Championship in both 2004 and 2005, and were National Indoor Champions in 2006. Felicia became a College All-American in that same year. She also won the Outdoor SEC individual Championship at 5K in 2005.

Then it was time for Felicia to rest in her hometown for a while. I know the feeling since I personally feel ready for some rest after just reading through her list of accomplishments.

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The next two parts of this story will deal with life after Tennessee, coaching and continuing to learn, and adventures of being a wife. and mom, and doctor.