



GRAND GRAMMARIAN

Live Your
PASSION

SHARON JARVIS

Many little girls dream of becoming a famous horse rider but how many truly realize that dream? For Sharon Jarvis (96) there was never any doubt. Horses were always her passion and she has made it her goal to live that passion to its fullest.

At Grammar in the 1990s Sharon was known for her love of horses and her determined spirit (some friends called it stubbornness). When a teacher sat her down to ask about her career plans she simply said, 'Horses'. That teacher probably thought that a career in horses was doubtful but even back then Sharon had a steely determination to succeed. She has gone on to prove that dreams can come true, especially if you are prepared to work hard!

Sharon returned from the 2010 World Equestrian Games (WEG) in the USA with two Bronze Medals in Dressage. Since then she has been named WA Para-equestrian Rider of the Year, WA Equestrian Sports Star of the Year and more recently, Equestrian Australia's Domestic Athlete of the Year, ahead of several Olympic riders. All of this is on top of placing 4th at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics.

The road to success has not been an easy one. As a small child Sharon suffered from Bone Cancer and endured intense treatment which kept her from her beloved horse riding for six years. The illness left her with a permanent weakness from the waist down particularly, the left side of her body. A less determined person may have given up on her dream to ride but this set back made Sharon all the more focused.

"Given my medical history I should not have survived. The fact that I am actually here at all gives me great inspiration. I feel that I have so much life to live and I am determined to make the most of it," explains Sharon.

"I am greatly inspired by top athletes but my real life hero is Walt Disney. He has provided me with amazing inspiration and it was so fitting for me to use his music in my Freestyle Dressage at the WEG."

However it was Sharon's dad who was her greatest inspiration. She explains, "The way my dad, Henry Jarvis lived his life really had an impact on me. His motto was, 'Live your passion!' and that is just what he did. He worked hard for what he loved. His passion was for farming, mine is for horse riding."

Sharon aims to go as far as possible with her riding. The London Paralympics in 2012 are next on her agenda followed by the WEG in Normandy in 2014. Never afraid to dream bold dreams, Sharon's ultimate aim is to ride for Australia in the Olympics!

To achieve these goals Sharon has a mountain of work ahead of her. For 2011 she plans to compete at the major Championship competitions in the Eastern states before heading to Europe with her competition horses in early 2012 in the lead up to the London Paralympics.

"The sport is always progressing so the bar just keeps getting higher. I must keep upping my skill level and working on the things that potentially build gold medal performances."

Ms Margaret Paterson :: Archivist