



Louis A. Datilio II

October 31, 1938 - February 6, 2026

North Hampton- Louis Anthony “Lou” Datilio II, fondly known around here as Master Coach, a pioneering figure in American gymnastics, passed away peacefully at his home in North Hampton, New Hampshire on Friday morning, February 6th. He was with his wife, True, by his side while listening to his favorite Hank Snow songs. He was predeceased by his parents, Louis A. Datilio and Rita Secker Datilio of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and his brothers, Ronald G. Datilio and Raymond J. Datilio.

He is survived by his wife, Sally True Dow, with whom he shared two sons, Nicholas, (Taylor) and William; his ex-wife, Diane Draves, with whom he shared two children, Louis III, (Jennifer) and Danielle; and his cherished grandchildren, Jacob, Callie, Brett, Talia, Lucy, and Olivia. He is also survived by thousands of gymnasts, students, and colleagues whose lives he shaped through almost 70 years of coaching, mentorship, and friendship.

One of Lou’s greatest joys in life was being passionately involved with his children’s athletic dreams and professional careers. He took immense pride in their accomplishments, always ready to talk about them to friends, cheering them on with the same encouragement and love he gave to every athlete he coached.

Lou’s journey in gymnastics began at Lincoln High School in Philadelphia, where his talent and drive quickly set him apart as a standout athlete. He went

on to compete nationally for the YMCA German Turners Association, was a Tumbling Champion at Temple University, and earned his Master's degree in Physical Education from Trenton State.

Lou dedicated his life to coaching, teaching, and building the sport he loved. After teaching Physical Education at Riverside HS, NJ he was hired by the University of New Hampshire in 1967 to launch the men's gymnastics program. In 1973, Lou purchased an 1895 farm in North Hampton, NH and transformed the barn and twelve horse stalls into what became the legendary NHAAGS (New Hampshire Academy of Artistic Gymnastics and Sport), the first gymnastics school in New Hampshire and now celebrating its 53rd year of continuous operation. Within a decade, he had led the Men's UNH Gymnastics team to nationals, then went on to establish the Women's program, guiding them to the national finals as well.

During his tenure at UNH, Lou expanded his world by opening seven gymnastics schools across the state, each helping to advance the sport he so deeply loved. As a Brevet Judge and one of the founding contributors to what became USA Gymnastics, Lou helped write the Artistic Gymnastics Junior Olympic Code of Points for the USGF, shaping standards still used across the country. Over nearly seven decades, he witnessed the sport's evolution, from the original AAU of his childhood to the USGF in the '60's and today's USA Gymnastics, and remained a vital force in its growth and integrity.

Lou had a deep love of music. As a child of a strong Italian family, he was proficient in accordion, played guitar with The Mansioniers throughout Philadelphia, would play his harmonica while waiting for his boys to come out of basketball or hockey practice and was always belting out, singing along to his favorite 50's country tunes. He especially enjoyed jazz and classic country and was a member of several Seacoast jazz bands through the years.

Lou had a lifelong passion for cars. He often reminisced about building an engine for his beloved Studebaker, dropping it into the car from his mother's kitchen window of his home in Philadelphia, telling tales of drag racing down Roosevelt Boulevard from streetlight to streetlight; stories that always brought a sparkle to his eye and a laugh to those listening. He participated in rally racing through Rumford, Maine in his customized Audi 400 which he spent many hours tweaking and fitting out with all the passion of an artist.

Those who had the privilege of knowing Lou will remember not only his mastery of the sport of Gymnastics but his passion, warmth, humor, and storytelling. Even in recent years, Lou could still be found in the gym; coaching, observing, and sharing his lifetime of wisdom with young athletes. His legacy lives on through his family, his countless students, and generations of gymnasts who came through his welcoming doors.

A memorial service to celebrate Lou's life will be held this summer, with details to follow.

Tribute Wall

GT

“ Coach Lou was an inspiration and an anchor in the gymnastics world. I was one of the many coaches Lou mentored and supported at NHAAGs in the 1980s. He was spirited, kind beyond words, and generous; always making me and those around him smile. Lou was a beautiful person in every possible way with lofty goals for gymnastics, his children, grandchildren, gymnasts and for his wonderful property. He was generous with everyone; mild, inquisitive, and loving. He will be missed by the hundreds if not thousands of lives he has impacted. RIP our tireless warrior for all things that are beautiful. I have you in my heart forever.

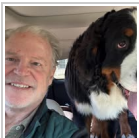
Graciela Trilla - March 01 at 05:26 AM

TR

“ 16 files added to the tribute wall



True - February 19 at 06:44 PM



“ True,
My sympathies to you and your family in the loss of your husband.
May he rest in peace and live in your hear forever.

Stephen Bottomley - February 16 at 08:30 PM

TR

Thank you Stephen, his heart was so big, i don't think it will fit! But we are grateful for the ease of his passing. XX

True - February 19 at 06:33 PM

JG

“ My deepest condolences to you and your family. Lou will be terribly missed by all of you. Sounds like someone I would have wished to know. He led a full life. May he rest in peace. Sincerely, Jackie Gacek

Jackie Gacek - February 16 at 12:25 PM

TR

Thank you, Jackie. I so appreciate your words, and yes, you especially would have never left the dining room until closing, because you both would have been chatting all night.

True - February 19 at 06:35 PM



“ 11 files added to the tribute wall



True Dow - February 14 at 08:21 AM

PC

Please accept my deepest sympathy at what I know is a very difficult time for you and your family. You are in my thoughts and prayers.
Pat Crane

Pat Crane - February 17 at 12:04 PM

LL

“*My condolences, True, to you and your family in the loss of Lou. I was always quite taken by his calm, kind demeanor and the sparkle in his eyes. His absence from the back of the church had been noted and the two of you thought of on each occasion. May God rest his soul and your heart be comforted in knowing Lou’s destination.* *Laurel Lent*”

Laurel Lent - February 10 at 09:37 AM