

2018 Strength & Power HoF Inductee Mike Manzo

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2018 New York Strength and Power Hall of Fame Inductee – Mike Manzo

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With nearly 40 years of being involved in the health and fitness industry, Mike has always had an inspiring way with people! By age twelve, Mike trained in Chinese Goju Karate martial arts under the teaching of Tom Daly. Intramural sports in high school brought him to the next level through his interests in baseball, soccer and wrestling. At age 20, recognizing the need to get bigger and stronger, Mike started lifting weights. From the start, he took this very seriously. While everyone else was going out to parties, Mike was home in his garage or at the public library pursuing his passion of training and researching kinesiology and nutrition and applying it all to his own training and life style.

In 1980, Mike started his own personal training business with the ambition of educating and motivating others. He sought out people in his circle of friends, at gyms and anyone who was interested. Sometimes this meant getting part time work at local gyms and fitness centers. As his business was growing, Mike began competing as a bodybuilder in 1980 which continued through 1984. Realizing he was not willing to succumb to the use of performance enhancing drugs, he decided to begin training as a powerlifter. In 1982, he created exercise programs for the Police Athletic League Youth Programs in Nassau County, New York. He has also designed international gyms in hotels in Shanghai, China. In 1983, Mike started working for the IFBB (International Federation of Body Building) selling merchandise where he met professional body builder Charles Glass. In 1984, Charles suggested Mike move to Venice, California to pursue his powerlifting career and work at Gold's Gym in Venice! By 1988, he competed in his first drug free powerlifting meet in California. That was all it took! He was addicted to the iron game! In addition, Mike had the opportunity to train many athletes and celebrities and had the opportunity to body guard Muhammad Ali for his induction into the Boxing Hall of Fame.

Upon returning to New York, Mike became a correction officer. Recognizing that correction officers and staff work long, stressful days often without the proper nutrition, Mike developed exercise and weight management programs for the officers and staff of the New York City, Department of Corrections (COPE-Corrections Officers Pursuing Excellence). Mike's compassion for others is what makes him want to share his knowledge and expertise with them.

In 1991, Mike was introduced to WNPf (World Natural Powerlifting Federation) which was the platform he was looking for. He wanted to compete in a 100% drug free federation. Mike was training and competing on a regular basis at the state and national level. He won several New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania competitions. He felt strong and unstoppable until something unexpected happened...

In 1997, Mike was involved in a head on collision which resulted in him breaking C3-C4 of his cervical spine. As if that wasn't enough, 7 weeks later, on the way to the doctor, he was involved in second car accident this time breaking his jaw. He was given the devastating prognosis that weight lifting was no longer an option for him. He was not going to accept this fate. He was determined to figure out a way to develop techniques and programs based in injury prevention and rehabilitation. He knew this would be important to him but would also help others train safely and well into the future. Longevity in the sport was his new goal. Believing in himself and with much tenacity, Mike defied all odds. He carefully structured his own rehabilitation over the course of two years at which point Mike was strong enough to get back on the platform! This propelled Mike into conducting workshops and clinics in a variety of gyms including seminars at Gold's Gym in Middletown, New York.

He brought sanctioned and non-sanctioned powerlifting events to the New York and New Jersey areas beginning in 2010 and he promoted and conducted these meets. He geared some of the meets toward teens, women and those older to introduce and encourage them into the sport. Mike was proud to train Jermaine Edie preparing him for the 2011 Special Olympics Powerlifting competition held in Athens's Greece. He believed in giving people an opportunity to challenge themselves in new ways. Beginning in 2011, Mike became a WNPf meet director and judge under Troy Ford, President; WNPf. Believing in the platform of drug free competition, he continues to be proud to work with Troy. Mike's WNPf Drug Free Powerlifting career is ongoing! He has won 3 world championships and holds one world record. He has 20 national championships and holds 11 national records. He has 19 state championships and holds 13 state records. Mike was awarded best lifter at the 2011 world championships.

Currently, Mike is a licensed massage therapist, a certified sports nutritionist and a certified personal trainer. Mike continues to successfully compete in the Masters' division and promotes and runs drug free powerlifting events to bring awareness to this drug free sport. He does not buy into the society mantra that when you reach a certain age you cannot do certain things. He is on a mission to prove you can do anything at any age! Mike is an inspiration! The selection committee is excited to induct Mike Manzo into the Strength and Power Hall of Fame!