

# RIDING INTO THE FUTURE

A SOUTH BAY PHILANTHROPIST AND ATTORNEY POWERS TO NEW HEIGHTS AS AN INTERNATIONAL CYCLIST.

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International athletes juggle training and competing with family and career, but Palos Verdes resident Gerald (Gerry) Agnew competes while also acting as father, grandfather, husband, community philanthropist and the founding partner of a renowned law firm.

Gerry became an international competitor just four years after he began cycling ... and one year after breaking his neck and having surgery that kept him immobilized for months. However, his success as a world-class athlete is no surprise to his seven children and seven grandchildren. He's as committed to cycling as he is to his family, his clients and the community.

Gerry's a former marathon runner and recreational cyclist, but during a visit to the VELO Sports Center in 2010, he became hooked on track cycling. Velodrome cycling takes place on a steeply banked oval track where two 180° turns are connected by two straights.

"Track cycling was a vertical learning curve for me where everything was new—from learning to assemble a bike to how to calculate gear ratios," says Gerry.

Tackling challenges is prototypical for this tenacious competitor. After working his way through college, Gerry attended law school. He quickly found his niche representing plaintiffs in serious injury cases in Los Angeles. In 1984 Gerry founded the firm Agnew Brusavich in the South Bay in order to be closer to his family.

"I've tried more cases than I can remember, but I know that I'm only as good as my next one," says Gerry.

Much like building a case for litigation, velodrome cycling requires athleticism for the duration and a calculated strategy. Gerry hired former U.S. Olympic coach Roger Young, and he quickly developed into a serious competitor.

At the 2011 SCNA Masters Track Champion-

ships, Gerry won gold medals for the Team Pursuit and the Individual Pursuit. Later in 2011 at the USA Cycling Masters Velodrome Championships, he won two bronze medals. In one year he had become the gold medalist for the region and the bronze medalist for the United States.

However, his success was short-lived after a freak biking accident in 2012 left Gerry with a broken neck and a concussion. The accident required two surgeries including screws into his neck and months of immobility while wearing a halo.

"I credit my recovery to my strong support group that included my coach, Roger; my trainer, J.J. Hendershot; my daughter and training partner, Sarah Munoz; my amazing wife, Jodi; and our kids," says Gerry.

Ferociously undeterred and positive, Gerry began attending spin classes in his halo neck gear to get in shape. After eight months of

rehabilitation he finally rode his bike in May 2013. Stuningly, he medaled in July 2013 at the SCNA Masters Track Championships and again in August 2013 at the USA Cycling Masters Velodrome Championships.

"I designated 2014 as my comeback year, so I began cross training with strength conditioning, spinning, boxing and Pilates," says Gerry. That unflinching commitment paid off: He won two gold medals at the 2014 SCNA Masters Track Championships and two gold medals and a bronze at the 2014 USA Cycling Masters Velodrome Championships.

In October 2014 Gerry went to Manchester, England, to compete at the World Track Masters Championships. He won the silver and bronze medals for the Team Sprint and Team Pursuit events while closing out the year as the National Masters Endurance Record Holder. In four years he went from novice to international medalist

and national record-holder, including a sabbatical for a serious injury.

As successful as Gerry is on the track, in the courtroom and at home, he also challenges himself as a community philanthropist. For 22 years, the Agnew Brusavich Scholarship has been awarded to more than 550 local high school students to attend community college honors programs.

"Kids are under so much peer pressure to go to big-name schools, but I'm a product of community college, and I believe in it—because after our kids finish the honors transfer program, we've got a 95% acceptance rate into four-year institutions," he says.

Gerry is also involved in other philanthropic causes including Cycle for Heroes and Climb for Heroes, both spearheaded by J.J. Hendershot. Gerry's firm also gives community service awards to those who volunteer tirelessly for the

community. Whether awarding academic, cycling or service awards or being a Clothes the Deal depository, Agnew Brusavich is committed to improving lives in the South Bay.

Gerry continued to medal at the regional and national level in 2015, and he intends to break the 2015 National Hour Record with Sarah. However, his ultimate goal is in October 2016 when the VELO Sports Center—his home track—hosts the Masters World Championships. Gerry will be among the fiercest competitors when he rides in front of his family and friends.

After all of his cycling success, Gerry most values the people he's met through cycling. "There's a whole spectrum of people involved in track cycling, and it's opened a new world for me," says Gerry.

For this family man, philanthropist and attorney, athletics is one more way he leaves his indelible handprint on so many lives. ■