

Q&A with *Amanda* { U.S. Olympic } Figure Skater } *Evora*

Interview by Jen Petty

After leaving Sugar Land to pursue her dreams on ice, Amanda Evora skated into national fame with her pair partner, Mark Ladwig, at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. Performing a personal best, they took 10th place as the top U.S. pair skating team, also capturing silver medals at the 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

How did you get into ice skating?

My family has always loved to watch skating. In 1991, my parents found my sister's old skates. I tried them on and I haven't stopped skating since.

What sets world competitors apart from others?

The difference is opportunity. I think the three qualities you need in order to become successful in your sport or business include a positive attitude, hard-working ethics, and a constant, relentless faith in yourself and what you're doing. Therefore, keeping in mind that those who cannot compete at the world level have these qualities, the only difference then would be the opportunity. They will probably have success in another area.

What have your parents been like throughout your career?

The best word I could use to describe my parents is supportive! However, even though they were supportive parents, they first made sure to teach me the many important lessons in life. They taught me how to work hard and be disciplined. Growing up, they taught me the importance of small tasks such as making my bed every morning or washing the dishes at night - chores that taught me that you must work hard to be successful. They made me realize that skating is a privilege. Not everyone gets the chance to skate! If I wanted to skate, I had to wake myself up at 4 a.m. every morning to be on the ice at 5 a.m. before elementary school.

How much do you practice?

Mark and I train for about six hours a day from Monday through Friday.

After trying on her sister's ice skates as a young girl, Amanda knew she had found her calling



Amanda and Mark took second place at the 2010 U.S. Figure Skating Championships, going on to finish 10th at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games



Amanda and Mark are excited to hear their scores during the 2010 Olympic Games

What have been your most challenging moments along the way?

Mark and I had been skating with each other for eight years before hitting the international stage. Although we have done many international competitions, the 2010 Winter Olympics was our world debut. Eight years seems to be a long time for a U.S. pair team to stay together before competing at a world level. Each year, we would evaluate and discuss the decision to skate another year. Some years were encouraging, and some years were disappointments. We harnessed those disappointments to feed what we now call our successes today!

Do you still feel nervous when you compete?

Of course! A former coach used to say to me, "Being nervous is a good thing. It lets you know what you're doing is important and allows you to skate to the best of your ability." Recently, I did a show with a skating champion I aspire to be like. This skater had been at the Olympics, a champion of many events, and yet, he still gets nervous. I thought to myself then that, one, it's okay to be nervous especially if the best of the best still are, and two, being nervous shows you that you still desire to be the best of the best!

What is the best part about what you do?

I live doing what I love to do. I know not everyone is so fortunate to live what they dream about. Don't get me wrong, I work very hard to keep skating and provide back to the sport. It isn't sunshine and flowers all the time, but I could not see myself doing anything else with my life!

What is the most challenging part about what you do?

Being away from family. I moved from Sugar Land to Bradenton, FL at the age of 17. I've stayed in Florida without family for most of the past eight years. Skating is very much an all-year sport. Our schedule and training regimen doesn't allow much time for breaks or vacations where I can visit my family.

How often do you get to come home to Sugar Land? Is there something you always do when you come back here?

Fortunately, I have been able to come home to Sugar Land for Christmas almost every year and usually one or two other times! It is tradition for us to go to the AMC movie theaters next to First Colony Mall. My favorite part of coming back home is seeing and hanging out with my sister's kids, Logan, Ayana, and Aiden! Some of my favorite restaurants I love going to include the Thai Cottage and La Madeleine. If time allows, I also like to visit the Galleria mall, where I used to skate when I was living in Sugar Land.

What does the future hold for you?

Since the 2010 Olympic Games, we competed at Worlds in March. In April, we did a couple of shows, then the Olympic team was invited to meet the President and Vice President at the White House. What a special moment! Recently, we came home to be special guests on the skating tour called *Smucker's Stars on Ice*. So, it's been a whirlwind of events, and we're planning some rest time before starting off the upcoming season. Mark and I have made the decision to continue competing for another year, as we both believe we can improve our skating ability from the year before!

What would be your advice to aspiring skaters?

The best advice I can give to aspiring skaters is to never give up. Some skaters have the impression that you have a timeline when goals need to be met before they become unattainable. I am a true believer that with the right attitude, hard work, and constant faith, you will get there. The most important quality is that constant, relentless faith in yourself and in what you're doing. Dream big! SLM

JEN PETTY is the editor of Sugar Land Magazine and mother of three sweet kids and still has big dreams for her life.

SUGAR LAND
MAGAZINE

**FIND HUNDREDS OF
FORT BEND RESOURCES**
CHECK US OUT ONLINE! > www.sugarlandmagazine.com

Top Ranking
In Google Searches

577,000
Hits A Month

 **Join us on Facebook!**

To add your business, email:
editor@sugarlandmagazine.com

Jobs **News** **Birthday Places** **Childcare Centers** **Golf Courses** **Restaurants** **Libraries** **Schools**
Events **Sports & Recreation** **Shopping** **Churches** **Doctors** **Dentists** **Medical Centers**