

Tennessee State University

Digital Scholarship @ Tennessee State University

Tennessee State University Olympians

Tennessee State University Olympic History

2020

Madeline Manning Mims

Julia Huskey

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/tsu-olympians>



Part of the [Sports Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Madeline Manning Mims (born February 11, 1948, in Cleveland, Ohio) , a Tigerbelle from 1968 to 1972, is the only American woman to win the Olympic 800 meter run, which she did in 1968. She also won a silver medal as part of the 4 x 400 meter relay team in the 1972 Olympics¹, and she competed in the 1976 Olympic Games. Although the United States did not compete in the 1980 Olympic Games, the thirty-two-year-old Mims was named to the team after winning the 800 meters, in the then second-fastest time (to her own record, set in 1976) by an American woman, at the 1980 Olympic trials². She was the top-ranked 800/880 runner in the world on three occasions³, and she is considered the second-best American (on points) ever to compete in that event. ⁴

Mims is credited with dispelling the idea that women, particularly women of color, are not suited to running longer distances, which the 800 meters was considered at the time.

Mims experienced a near-fatal bout of spinal meningitis at the age of three, and her poor health continued for much of her childhood. ⁵ Sports, however, made her feel stronger, so she worked hard at basketball, volleyball, and track. She thought track could offer the most opportunities, so she joined Ed Temple's Tigerbelles. While she was at TSU, she won one of her six total national championships in the outdoor 800 meters/880 yards⁶. Manning Mims also won the indoor 800/880 title four times⁷.

Manning Mims (who was also known as Madeline Jackson) retired from competition in 1981⁸. She was inducted into the National Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1984. She has continued her involvement in the Olympic movement by serving as a chaplain: the 2016 Rio Olympics was her eighth in that role⁹; she has also recorded as a gospel singer and has been a highly-regarded motivational speaker.



¹ “Madeline Manning-Jackson.” Olympics.org, accessed April 9, 2020.
<https://www.olympic.org/madeline-manning-jackson>

² Nick Bertram, “Manning Runs away from Field in Trials,” *Oregonian* 25 June 1980.

³ “All Time Women’s World Rankings Leaders,” *Track & Field News*, accessed 23 April 2020.
<https://trackandfieldnews.com/all-time-womens-world-rankings-leaders-2020/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jenny McCoy, “50 Years after Winning Olympic Gold, Madeline Manning Mims Reflects on Her History-Making Moment.” *Self*, October 18, 2018, accessed April 8, 2020.
<https://www.self.com/story/madeline-manning-mims-reflects-on-her-history-making-win>

⁶ “Women’s 800 m” *USATF Outdoor Champions*, accessed April 23 2020,
<https://www.flipsnack.com/USATF/usatf-outdoor-champions/full-view.html>: 131.

⁷ “Women’s 800 m” *USATF Indoor Champions*, accessed April 23, 2020,
<https://www.flipsnack.com/USATF/usatf-indoor-champions/full-view.html>: 81.

⁸ Nick Bertram, “Manning bows out with grace, charm,” *Oregonian* 18 September 1981.

⁹ Pat Graham, “800-meter champ Mims remains pioneer 50 years later.” AP News, October 14, 2018, accessed April 23, 2020. <https://apnews.com/a6fe1811b7c44aff9540625da4b2330a>

Bibliography

“All time women’s world rankings leaders,” *Track & Field News*. Accessed April 23, 2020.
<https://trackandfieldnews.com/all-time-womens-world-rankings-leaders-2020/>

Bertram, Nick. “Manning bows out with grace, charm.” *Oregonian* 18 September 1981.

Bertram, Nick. "Manning runs away from field in trials." *Oregonian* June 25, 1980.

Graham, Pat. "800-meter champ Mims remains pioneer 50 years later." AP News, October 14, 2018. Accessed April 23, 2020. <https://apnews.com/a6fe1811b7c44aff9540625da4b2330a>

McCoy, Jenny. "50 Years after Winning Olympic Gold, Madeline Manning Mims Reflects on Her History-Making Moment." *Self*, October 18, 2018. Accessed April 8, 2020. <https://www.self.com/story/madeline-manning-mims-reflects-on-her-history-making-win>

"Madeline Manning Mims Ran for Gold and Works for Salvation." Cleveland Women.com. Accessed April 24, 2020. <http://www.clevelandwomen.com/people/madeline-manning-mims.htm>

"Women's 800 m." *USATF Indoor Champions*. Accessed April 23, 2020. <https://www.flipsnack.com/USATF/usatf-indoor-champions/full-view.html>: 81.

"Women's 800 m." *USATF Outdoor Champions*. Accessed April 23 2020, <https://www.flipsnack.com/USATF/usatf-outdoor-champions/full-view.html>: 131.