

Subject: Drake Relays Hall of Fame Inducts Arnardottir, Nuttall And Creer
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2014 8:09:50 PM Central Daylight Time
From: Drake AthleticCommuncations
To: Tyler Patton

DRAKE ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS | MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, April 24, 2014

CONTACT: Ty Patton, Drake Athletic Communications

(515) 271-3014 | ty.patton@drake.edu

Drake Relays Hall of Fame Inducts Arnardottir, Nuttall And Creer

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Drake Relays enshrined two legends from ‘America’s Athletic Classic’ into the Drake Relays Athletes Hall of Fame during a ceremony on Thursday, April 24 at Sheslow Auditorium inside of Old Main. Iowa State’s John Nuttall and Georgia’s Gudrun Arnardottir joined track and field royalty like Jesse Owens, Wilma Rudolph and other accomplished Drake Relays performers that have earned one of the highest honors the Relays can bestow on athletes for their accomplishments on the Blue Oval.

The Relays Hall of Fame also gained a coach as former Wayland Baptist head coach John Creer joined some of the most influential track and field coaches in the world in the Relays Coaches Hall of Fame.

Gudrun Arnardottir was one of the top collegiate hurdlers at the Relays in the early 1990s. She was relatively unknown in the United States prior to her 1993 performance at the Relays that helped the Iceland native take the U.S. track and field community by storm while competing for the University of Georgia.

Her nearly 1,000-mile journey with her Georgia teammates to compete at the Drake Relays in 1993 was well worth it. Arnardottir ran away with the Relays title in the 100-meter hurdles with a final time of 13.44. Prior to Relays her best time was 13.71, which was a huge improvement from her time of 14.11 only a few months earlier.

According to Arnardottir, winning the 100-meter hurdles helped her confidence and “was a very exciting victory.” That same year Arnardottir also participated in the 4x100 and the 4x400-meter relay.

Two years later, Arnardottir made her return to the Drake Relays, and the second time exceeded the first. Once again she took home the 100-meter hurdles title, but that wasn’t all. The Georgia Bulldogs placed first in the shuttle-hurdle relay with Arnardottir as the anchor and second place in the 4x200-meter relay with Arnardottir as the lead-

off runner.

By the end of the 1994 Relays, Arnardottir was a three-time Relays champion. The following year, she added two more to her tally as a double-champion in the 100 and 400-meter hurdles. She was also named Outstanding Performer of the 1996 Drake Relays, the first female athlete from Georgia to win the award.

Arnardottir's track career continued well past her time at Georgia and at the Drake Relays. She went on to compete in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta where she represented her home country, Iceland. She also competed at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Much like Arnardottir, John Nuttall was a European athlete that saw his career blossom inside Drake Stadium. Nuttall's legacy was in doubt early in his career as he was perpetually hampered by injury. But in 1998, things changed for Nuttall – first on the cross country course. His endurance and speed, and his ability to overcome two years' worth of injuries, allowed him become a stand-out athlete for the Cyclones' cross country team. In the fall of 1988 Nuttall helped carry his team to a sixth place finish at the NCAA Championship. This was only the beginning of Nuttall's soon-to-be success.

Nuttall's cross country success propelled his track and field career to a new level. In 1989 Nuttall accompanied the Cyclones to the Drake Relays, where he competed in the 4x1,600-meter relay. The team had taken home the title for the previous two years, and Nuttall helped ISU make it a three-peat. Running as the anchor, Nuttall ran a split of 4:02.30 and a clocking of 16:14.08.

From there, Nuttall's track and field success continued. The following year, Nuttall returned and helped ISU take the 4x1,600-meter title for the fourth consecutive time. Nuttall ran a 3:59.80 split, which was at least four seconds faster than the times of all three of his teammates. After claiming the champion title Nuttall said the race "was really enjoyable" because the team was "on a roll."

That same year, Nuttall placed first in the 1,500-meter race with a record time of 3:41.74. He was also named the Outstanding Men's Performer of the Drake Relays.

Nuttall ended his track career with ISU at the Drake Relays the way any athlete would hope to. In 1991 Nuttall defended his 1,500-meter title and helped the Cyclones clinch the championship title in the 4x1,600-meter relay for the fifth year in a row.

Through it all, Nuttall raced for the improvement and the excitement. In the end, his final remarks were that he "just enjoyed the race and the victory," – what he had been working for since his questionable beginning.

The 2014 Coaches Hall of Fame inductee turned a winless program at the Relays into one of the most dominant Relays teams of the 1980s. Prior to John Creer taking the reins of the Wayland Baptist program, the Pioneers had

never won at the Drake Relays despite regularly competing at the Relays. When Creer stepped into the position as head coach for the Pioneers' track and field team in 1983, something shifted. Suddenly the Pioneers became a threat and a team that worth watching out for at the Drake Relays.

Three years into Creer's tenure at Wayland Baptist, the Pioneers attended the Drake Relays once again, this time as a different, stronger team than before. Whether it was a stroke of fate or simply an application of all the hard work that had been poured into the season, the Pioneers were a team to be reckoned with. That year, the Pioneers won the 4x100-meter relay, the 4x200-meter relay, the 4x400-meter relay, the sprint medley relay and the university-college javelin. Not only that, the team broke three records – the 4x200-meter record and the 4x400-meter record in the preliminary race and the finals.

In the following two years, the Pioneers continued to succeed at the Drake Relays under Creer's leadership. In 1986 they became the champions in four of the six college relays, winning all but the distance medley and the 4x800-meter relay. In 1987 the Pioneers once again won four titles, this time winning all but the distance medley and the 4x200-meter relay. That year, James Rolle, a runner from Wayland Baptist said, "the coaches [at Wayland] create an atmosphere that's like home away from home ... [they] are always willing to help."

But in 1988 the Pioneers almost didn't leave that home to compete in the Relays. That year, several of the Pioneer runners were injured or unable to compete, which led Creer to the decision that his team wouldn't be participating in the Drake Relays. "If they can't be at their best, maybe they should just stay home," he said.

Seniors Alrick Munroe and Devon Morris weren't happy. They quickly pleaded with Coach Creer, telling him how much they loved their previous experience at the Drake Relays. Despite his concerns, Creer sent a team of eight athletes to the 79th annual Drake Relays with low expectations and the hope that they'd at least be able to compete with some of the top collegiate programs.

What happened that year was shocking and unprecedented. The Wayland Baptist Pioneers ended the Drake Relays taking first place in all six collegiate relays. Prior to 1988, the most relays a single team had won in a year was five by Illinois in 1943. By the end of the 1988 Relays, the Pioneers had tallied 19 total Relays wins in six years, a huge accomplishment for a team that hadn't won a race until 1983.

During his time with the Pioneers, his team earned 20 individual national championships and 75 All-American honors. In his career Creer coached three women's and seven men's track and field national championship teams, two world champions and 19 Olympic games participants, four of whom medaled. He is currently in the Hall of Fame for the NAIA, Missouri Baptist University, Lindenwood University, Wayland Baptist, and now the Drake Relays Hall of Fame.

-DRAKE-

--

Ty Patton
Drake University
Assistant AD for Athletic Communications
Office – 515-271-3014
Mobile – 205-310-1271
E-Mail – ty.patton@drake.edu
Twitter – [@TyPatton_Drake](https://twitter.com/TyPatton_Drake)