

# Sherry (Hawco) Delanty

**Feb. 17, 1964 - Oct. 26, 1991**

She had the heart and soul of a lion and very well might have become an Olympic medalist had it not been for the Canadian boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games.

Hawco was a dynamo in gymnastics circles, reaching the pinnacle of the sport in Canada in 1979 and 1980 when she was the Canadian champion and top Olympic qualifier.

In 1978 at the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton Hawco, just 14, won a gold medal as part of the victorious Canadian team and won a silver medal for finishing second in the all-around standings.

At the Pan-American Games the following year in Puerto Rico she earned two gold medals, winning the beam and, as part of the winning team.

Great things were anticipated for Hawco at Moscow in 1980 but like hundreds of other North American Olympians, she would never get the chance to vie for Olympic gold.

Nevertheless, she had many highs in her gymnastics career.

As late as 1998 she still held the distinction of having earned the best-ever finish by a Canadian at a competition in Russia. In 1977 she placed ninth overall at the Riga Invitational, following up with a 13th-place overall finish at the Moscow News competition.

She began in the sport casually enough when her public school teacher at Manchester Public School urged her parents to enroll her in a formal gymnastics program at the YWCA. She was seven. Within the year she had graduated to the Cambridge Kips under the watchful eyes of Don and Benita Rope, two of the best coaches in Canada. She was soon winning competitions and was a national-level athlete as she entered her teens.



**Coach Benita Rope with Sherry Hawco in the early 1980s.**

In 1976 at the age of 12 she competed in her first overseas event, in Germany. She was the top Canadian at the meet. During her career she competed around the world.

Hawco had a terrific rivalry with fellow Canadian Elfi Schlegel, but she was generally regarded as Schlegel's superior. Her best two events were the beam and the floor, though she preferred the beam to all else.

She retired from the sport in 1982 after trying to return from a serious knee injury suffered the previous year.

But less than a decade later, tragedy would strike, Hawco had married and the young couple was expecting the birth of their first child. It was during her pregnancy that she was diagnosed with cancer. For several months she fought on with a tenacity befitting one of Canada's toughest and most talented gymnasts.

Sherry Hawco, one of the country's greatest athletes, succumbed to cancer on October 26, 1991, just seven weeks after giving birth to son Brandan.

She was among the first inductees to the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame, and her green competition tights from the Pan-American Games are today one of the most prized artifacts in the Hall of Fame collection.



**Inducted 1997**