

Les Tipton: from throwing to sculpting

While attending Rainier High School, he competed in baseball, football and track. Due to his athletic abilities, he was granted the opportunity to compete in the East/West Shriner Football game, and also earned the title of AA State High School Champion in the javelin and the discus for his track attributes.

By the time he was a sophomore at the University of Oregon, he started setting his sights on Olympic competition. In his senior year of college, he knew he had a good chance of actually making it to the 1964 Olympics, being held in Tokyo, Japan.

He achieved his Olympic dream as he represented the United States in the javelin event in '64.

He must be a coach now, right?
Wrong.

The person in question, Les Tipton, gave up coaching two years ago when he resigned from the job of Clackamas head track coach to devote more time to his artwork and teaching.

Even though Tipton gave up coaching as a job, he still unofficially coaches College tracksters.

The College art instructor also keeps in touch with his track days by conducting track clinics at local high schools and the College.

Even though art and athletics seem an unlikely combination, that didn't stop Tipton from taking part in both since he discovered the two when he was in the eighth grade.

"There is a lot of correspondence between the two," stated Tipton. "Sensitivity, ability to think about an idea and then perform it, hand-and-eye coordination, and both are abstract."

To Tipton, "there is no financial reward (in art or athletics). They are abstracted from the norm of life, but there's a personal need to participate."

"I consider myself more a teacher than an artist," stated Tipton, but he has submitted some of his artwork to small group shows.

Tipton works mainly in sculpting, but also shows his artistickness in ceramics and jewelry-making.

In his ceramics work, Tipton doesn't usually create objects such as cups and dishes, but instead does mostly sculpture ceramics.

The goal Tipton is working toward in his art is to gain individualism.

In making his decision to give up athletics for full-time work in art, Tipton stated, "Family was the most important thing, but it was something I had to decide on myself."

"After 20 years of athletics, I won't give it up totally," stated Tipton. "I miss the contact with the athletes," he added.



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