

Colleen Marx Olney

Colleen Olney was the mother and first fencing teacher of two sons who were outstanding champions: Michael and Robert Marx. She is also sometimes known as “the mother of Oregon fencing.” Much later, she was the first coach of Mariel Zagunis. She started fencing in the 1960s as physical therapy after an automobile accident. After her competitive career, she began to teach fencing and decided to support her sons in their competitive aspirations by creating a rich fencing environment for them. Her legacy includes the Northwest Fencing Center, the Oregon Fencing Alliance, and free fencing programs in the Portland area. Her record is given below.

1972

- She brings Maître Yves Auriol to Portland and they start Salle Auriol (now the Northwest Fencing Center).
- She begins teaching at St. Helen’s Hall (later Oregon Episcopal School).

1974

- Begins organizing the hosting of the 1975 Junior Olympics

1976

- Introduces fencing in the Portland Public Schools.

1977

- Brings Alex Beguinet from France to assist in the public school program.

1977

- Hosts the US National Championships

1978

- Starts teaching in Vancouver, WA.
- Salle Auriol moves to Beaverton.
- Begins serious fund raising. After her children aged out of the Junior Olympics Colleen served as AFLA Junior Olympic Chairman for several years. Later, she served as VP of the USFA.

1980

- She hosts the Junior Olympics

1981

- Starts the "Portland Project" where she supported athletes and sends many to Europe to train for 9 weeks of training.

- Jana Angelakis wins Women’s Foil in Paris

1982

- USFA cancels support for the training center; Olney establishes the US Fencing Center Foundation

1984

- Hosts Junior Olympics, pushes for national Youth age groups competitions
- Hires Maître Regis for Salle Auriol
- Vice President, USFA 1984-86

1990

- Fourth Salle established in Portland area.
- US Fencing Center Foundation offers free afternoon fencing for juniors.

1991

- Foundation opens permanent office for Oregon Division

1993

- Hires Ed Korfanty as Head Coach, US Fencing Center Foundation. Free fencing training is offered mornings and afternoons.

1995

- Portland Public Schools offer one week of fencing at every middle and high school.
- Portland Community Schools Department offers after-school classes at four sites.
- Portland Community Centers plan evening fencing classes.