

Marina Stepanova?

Born:	1 May 1950
Event:	400 m Hurdles
Titles:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Three-time World Record holder 1979 (54.78, Moscow), 1986 (53.32, Stuttgart), 1986 (52.94, Tashkent)◆ Four-time USSR Champion 400/h (1979, 1985, 1986), 400-indoor 1984◆ European Champion (1986)◆ Winner of "Friendship-84" (1984)◆ Winner of the first Goodwill Games (1986)
Personal Best:	52.94 sec.

NSA When and how did you become involved in Athletics?

I became involved in 1964 in school, at the invitation of a teacher.

NSA What were the most thrilling moments in your career as an athlete?

The victory against Rossley and Zelentsova in the GDR-USSR match in Leipzig (1979); my victory in the competition of socialist countries in Prague "Friendship-84" (alternative to Olympic Games – 1984); my selection as "IAAF Female Athlete of the Year " in 1984 (ahead of Olympic Champion Moutawakel); the victory against Sabine Busch in the 1986 European Championships in Stuttgart; my selection as "Best Ever" 400m Hurdler on the occasion of IAAF 75 years anniversary; and my entry into the Guinness World Book of Records in 1986 as the oldest world record holder in the history of Athletics.

NSA What were the most disappointing moments in your career as an athlete?

My second place in the World Cup in Montreal (1979) due to failure at the final

hurdle of the race and the refusal of USSR to participate in the Olympic Games in 1984.

NSA What is your current profession?

I'm a teacher of Physical Education and a coach of the team of the Engineering-Economic University, St.Petersburg.

NSA How did you manage the change from practical Athletics to your profession?

I graduated from the Institute for Physical Culture, named after P.F.Lesgaft. Later, I worked, prepared and wrote a scientific dissertation and received the title of "Lecturer".

NSA Are there any qualities you gained from Athletics that you can use in your current profession?

There are many good qualities, but the main one is the ability to choose a goal, work patiently and wait to achieve the planned result.

NSA Do you have a family? Do you encourage your family to practice Athletics?

I have a daughter. She studies in the university and my husband and I coach her. This means that my daughter's coaching needs are well taken care of, as my husband used to be my own trainer. He coached me after I gave birth to my daughter, teaching me to run hurdles in a new rhythm - 15 strides through 7 hurdles, followed by 17 strides. [Before that time I would run the entire race using 17 strides.] The new strategy resulted in two World records.

NSA What are your hobbies and interests?

I like to bake pies and tarts, go to the drama theatre named after Georgy Tovstonogov and go to Mariinsky Opera/ Ballet theatre to watch classical ballet.

NSA What types of physical activity do you currently enjoy?

I roller skate, swim and take long walks in the forest to pick wild berries and mushrooms.

NSA Are you still involved in Athletics somehow or do you follow international Athletics?

I follow all the competitions and I even do TV commentary when I am invited to do so.

NSA What is your impression of the current state of international Athletics?

First of all, I am happy that athletes over 30 years of age continue to compete and achieve high results. Secondly, I think it is fantastic that Athletics is practiced in over 210 countries.

NSA Could you comment, in particular, on the current status of women in Athletics?

I wish that more young girls would continue to practice Athletics after graduating from secondary school in Russia. When they begin to do so the competitiveness of women's Athletics will be even better at the world level.

NSA What advice would you give to young athletes (and their parents) who are interested in joining an Athletics program?

The main goals in Athletics are: to develop a comprehensive personality; to learn how to make yourself overcome difficulties; and to get special pleasure from doing extremely hard work in every kind of weather – heat, wind, rain or snow.

