



NJSIAA TRAILBLAZER

Joetta Clark Diggs is a four-time Olympian, a motivational specialist, businesswoman, author, television/radio personality, fitness advocate, and more. She graduated from Columbia High School in Maplewood in 1980, where she was a beneficiary of the initial wave of opportunities afforded female athletes by the passage of Title IX in 1972. Her high school career was so spectacular that she was later named Female Track Athlete of the 20th Century by the Star-Ledger. She has also been elected to the NJSIAA Hall of Fame.

During her Columbia career, she won four NJSIAA Meet of Champions 800 outdoor titles, an indoor Meet of Champions title in the 1,500, and set a state record in the 800 outdoors that held for 32 years.

Among her many other high school accomplishments, when Columbia initiated its Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006 to honor greats from its more than 100-year history, she was a charter inductee, along with two other Athletes of the Century, a 15-year NBA player and a coach who is also part of the NJSIAA Hall of Fame.

After a tremendous college career at the University of Tennessee, where she was later inducted into its Hall of Fame, she went on to represent the United States at the Olympic Games in 1988, 1992, 1996, and 2000.

During her 24-year career as a half-mile runner, she was ranked among the Top 10 Americans in over 21 of those years. From 1991 to '98, she was ranked in the Top 10 in the world and was an 11-time National Champion. She set world and American records and captured World Championship medals and served as captain of the Women's USA team in 2000.

After retiring as an elite athlete in 2000, she's become a highly-sought motivational speaker and is President of Joetta Sports and Beyond LLC, where she delivers messages of health, fitness, and empowerment to corporations, colleges, medical programs, and civic organizations. She authored a book entitled "Joetta's 'P' Principals for Success: Life Lessons Learned from Track and Fields." She also has a perfume and body scrub called "Joetta."

She established the Joetta Clark Diggs Sports Foundation in 2002 to promote involvement in physical activities for girls and boys in grades K-12. The foundation is committed to teaching good health and positive work ethics associated with participation in sports. It also strives to introduce different opportunities to children in the sports and entertainment industries and focuses on the correlation between academics and athletics. Among her other honors, she was chosen by Sports Illustrated in 1998 as a Hometown Hero. She is a member of many other halls of fame, including the New Jersey Hall of Fame, the USA Track & Field Hall of Fame, the Penn Relays Hall of Fame, and the Millrose Games Hall of Fame at Madison Square Garden.

