



CAPITOL CITY SPEAKERS BUREAU

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Jean Driscoll

Travels from: Illinois

Fee Range: \$7,501 - \$10,000

Jean Driscoll was born in Milwaukee, WI with spina bifida (an open spine). It affected her ability to walk and included other neurological complications as well. Although there were challenges during childhood, her determination to get the most out of life was always there. She began using a wheelchair at the age of 15 and after learning about wheelchair sports from a high school friend, she started pursuing athletic opportunities with fervor. The Milwaukee Public Schools Division of Recreation provided her first wheelchair sports experiences. After being recruited to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, world-renowned coaches developed her into one of the world's most successful competitors.

During her career, Jean was the first eight time winner of the Boston Marathon. She set 5 new course records as well as 5 world best times and has held Boston's fastest time in the women's wheelchair division since 1990. It currently stands at 1 hour, 34 minutes and 22 seconds for the 26.2 mile distance. In addition to her success in Boston, Jean also won two Olympic medals, 12 Paralympic medals, and still holds the world record in the 10,000 meter (6.2 mile) track event that was set during the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Jean remains the only 12-time champion of the Lilac Bloomsday 12K Road Race held in Spokane, Washington and still owns the course record in her division from 1995.

Her successes have been celebrated by many. The University of Rhode Island and the Massachusetts School of Law awarded her Honorary Doctorate degrees in 1997 and 2002 respectively. Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines provided Jean with one of its highest honors in 2003 when they named her the Godmother of their Voyager Class Series ship, Mariner of the Seas. She is also in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' "Hall of Champions" and the Wheelchair Sports, USA Hall of Fame.

Jean retired from her successful racing career following the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia. For over 20 years, she has offered encouragement and motivation as a speaker to hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. Through a partnership that began in 2001 with Joni and Friends, Inc., Jean began working with people who have disabilities in Ghana, West Africa. Her alma mater, the University of Illinois, has caught the vision and is now supporting this work as well. In addition to motivational speaking, Jean works as the Associate Director of Development in the College of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Illinois.

In July 2012, Jean was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame, one of the only national sports halls of fame that includes fan voting as part of its selection process.