

IDEA Health & Fitness Source
10455 Pacific Center Court
San Diego, CA 92121-4339

November 16, 2004

Dear Awards Committee;

It is an unusual pleasure to have the opportunity to write this letter in support of **Shirley Archer** for the IDEA Fitness Instructor of the Year. In a few weeks I will have known Ms. Archer for 2 years as the instructor of the first fitness course I have ever taken, a course I am still enrolled in. I base my recommendation on my life-altering experience with Ms. Archer in this context, and our frequent after-class conversations about life, science, philosophy, and politics.

As a university educator myself for the last 20 years, I recognize in Ms. Archer three characteristics of the most effective teachers: superior depth and breadth of knowledge about her field; solid, individualized plans for long-term, beneficial behavior change; and a remarkable ability to connect with people personally, to convey the passion she clearly has for her life's work, and to motivate people to want and to work for the good things she offers. What these characteristics have meant to me in the last 2 years include changes that are easily measured (I'm 20 lbs leaner and at a peak of physical fitness I haven't seen since college) and those that aren't so easily measured (these changes are part of my life now, I *want* to be fit, eat right, be active and engaged in the world, *be well*). I also see classmates who have been similarly changed, and I see people who are new to the class *staying in the class*.

As a biomedical researcher who publishes extensively in neuroscience, I have been particularly impressed with the sophistication of Ms. Archer's understanding of mind-brain-body issues and physical-mental-spiritual matters. These concerns are reflected in her classroom teaching and in her outstanding published work. I use her *Everything Weight Training Book*, *The Pilates Deck*, and her new *Pilates Fusion: Well-Being for Body, Mind, and Spirit*. These books are clearly extensions of her classroom teaching—straightforward and portable, they are doing for thousands what Ms. Archer does in person for me and my classmates every week.

Ms. Archer is particularly active in the Stanford University community, through the Stanford Prevention Research Center. But her work extends all over the Bay Area and, indeed, across the world. She lectures on fitness at local and international meetings, writes and provides expert commentary for magazine and newspaper articles, and works with local industry leaders to improve health and fitness in the workplace. She is also committed to her own wellness education, attending several meetings a year to continue developing as fitness instructor and health educator.

On top of all this, Shirley is just a gas! She's funny, friendly, and upbeat, with a dazzling smile and easy laugh that helps pull us all out of the stress-filled doldrums of mid-day.

Since starting Shirley's course I have attended classes taught by several other fitness instructors. They are often great, but they are not Shirley—for most instructors teaching is something that they do, but for Shirley it's more something that she *is*. I can imagine no better representative of the IDEA Health & Fitness Association, and no more deserving person for the award of Fitness Instructor of the Year. It is my privilege to give Shirley Archer my unconditional support. I would be happy to discuss her nomination further with you.

Sincerely yours,

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