Olympic Champion Jackie Joyner-Kersee

Since ancient Greek times, spectators have marveled at the athletic feats of Olympians. But no one could have predicted that one of the greatest Olympic athletes in history would come from a poor, crime-ridden neighborhood in St. Louis, Illinois. Jackie Joyner-Kersee’s aspirations to achieve greatness through sports helped lift her out of poverty and into the record books.

Jackie’s achievements in track and field are nothing short of spectacular. A six-time Olympic medalist in track and field, Jackie was named *Sports Illustrated for Women’s “Greatest Female Athlete of the 20th Century.” During the 1988 Olympics, Jackie posted the highest score ever in the heptathlon, a grueling test of seven events: 100-meter hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200-meter sprint, long jump, javelin throw, and 800-meter sprint. In fact, Jackie still dominates the heptathlon record board, with the top six best results ever, including her 7,291-point world record.

Jackie has been an inspiration to athletes the world over, and not only for her feats in track and field. Jackie was also a talented volleyball and basketball player; she even played basketball in college and as a professional in the American Basketball League. Jackie’s competitive spirit and love for sports are both genuine and contagious. She has encouraged and inspired many young athletes to pursue their dreams, including future stars Mia Hamm (soccer) and Marion Jones (basketball). Moreover, Jackie has given back to the community through the Jackie Joyner-Kersee Youth Foundation, which helps young people and their families in the St. Louis area. Jackie Joyner-Kersee will no doubt be remembered as one of the greatest athletes of all time.