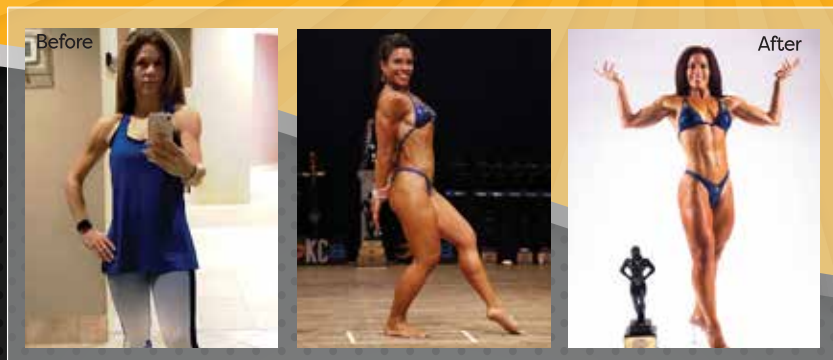


2019

SOUTHERN MUSCLE GUIDE presents

COURAGE AWARD Finalist

KELLY WRIGHT



While my bodybuilding journey has been relatively short, it certainly has not been easy. I started lifting weights about a year ago. Six months into it, people started asking if I was preparing for a bodybuilding competition. I thought to myself, “you know, maybe I would like to”.

I began training with Dave Rider, a personal trainer, who I thought would be helping me prepare for my first show. However, seven weeks before the show, Rider suffered a stroke, affecting his ability to move and speak. No doubt this tragedy would be life changing for him just as three years prior, being diagnosed with a thyroid disease was life changing for me. At the time, doctors told me I would never lose weight. I determined to prove them wrong.

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Another trainer in Iowa, Joe Laxton, heard about my situation and Rider's stroke and was inspired to help get me to the stage. I'll be the first to admit, it's very hard to push yourself when you're used to having a trainer by your side and now your workouts are online, your trainer is remote, your accountability is through phone, text or email, and no one is spotting you ... but the community rallied around me, “Kelly,

don't give up. If you need a spotter, we're here. If you need anything, just ask.” It was just amazing how encouraging and supportive everyone was.

The week before the show, I suffered a heat stroke when the combination of water depleting and working long hours outdoors forced me to the emergency room. However, all of my hard work paid off when I was standing in the center of the stage being celebrated. The truth be told, after learning about Dave's stroke, I didn't think I could prepare for a show on my own and I wanted to quit, but then I decided, in addition to following through with my own goals, I wanted to make him proud and show him all his time and hard work had paid off. I won 1st place in all of the Women's Physique categories I entered plus I won the Women's Physique Overall Winner title of the 2019 National Physique Committee Knox Classic Bodybuilding Championships.

I have never thought of myself as a role model but if my story and experiences can inspire others, then maybe I should. Since the show, many new opportunities have come my way, including being sponsored to compete in another show and being offered a position as a personal trainer at the gym I train at. Whatever lies ahead for me, sharing my fitness journey with others will definitely play an important part!