



2019

SOUTHERN MUSCLE GUIDE presents

COURAGE AWARD Finalist

CINDY LANE-ROSS



I was a youth tennis pro, ranked #1 in Alabama and ranked #5 in the Southern Division. I received a full scholarship to Union University in Jackson, Tennessee and I competed at the college level until I began experiencing excruciating pain in my wrists. The pain required bilateral surgery in both of my hands, and resulted in months of recovery and rehab. I recovered and won the national championship, but my wrists went out again and I needed two more surgeries and was finally diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis at the age of 19. Through the years, I was put on numerous medications including multiple chemo drugs to suppress my immune system and I have battled and rehabbed from over 22 surgeries, including a total wrist infusion.

My life revolved around achieving my goals. I would out-train and out-play everyone. After my tennis career came to an end, I lost a part of me. In the years following, I dove into my career but continued to be depressed, neglected many personal relationships, and unfortunately my self-care routine. Multiple deaths in the family, including my father, mother and brother, really threw me off course and I turned to food.

My illness had taken over my life, and I decided to take control and fight back. I graduated college with a BS in Exercise Science, began offering personal training services, and opened a personal training studio, Bodies By Cindy. Though I have moved to the beach and have since closed the studio, I continue to work closely with the community where I live and have many personal training clients.

Since my diagnosis 20 years ago, I have had personal

setbacks, but I know how to battle back. However, in 2017, I allowed myself to believe it was okay to miss multiple days of training and eat whatever I wanted. That train of thought led to a 40+ pound weight gain and self-neglect. When an old friend voiced her concern; once again I battled back from personal despair.

With the encouragement and support of my husband, Jason, a personal trainer and an avid lifter himself, I began to love what I saw in the mirror. That's when I decided to compete in my first bodybuilding competition in October 2018. I believe, having RA has made me a more determined person. I embrace the challenges that I know I'll face every day. Never in a million years did I believe I would be able to lift weights again, but I can and I do! With the right diet, supplements, and medication, my RA is under control, and I feel stronger than ever.

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I want all women to know you can be fit, strong and healthy at any age and that endurance and strength can even peak later in life. We all have setbacks in life, some of us more than others, but you just have to pick yourself up and start believing that you can live your best life despite whatever you are facing. Living with RA is a challenge every day, but I embrace what lies ahead and hope to inspire others along the way.