



Biography:

Since childhood, athletics have been John Register's passion. Born March 9, 1965 in St. Louis, Missouri, he began swimming competitively at the Oak Park, Illinois YMCA, quickly moving to baseball, football and eventually track and field. While attending the University of Arkansas he was a three-time All-American in the NCAA long jump and 4x400m relay competitions. Upon completing a bachelor's degree in communications in 1988, John enlisted in the U. S. Army where he served from 1988 to 1994, while still pursuing athletic excellence.

In 1988 John qualified for the Olympic trials in the 110m hurdles; he again qualified in the 400m hurdles in 1992. With these accomplishments, John seemed destined to compete as a member of the 1996 Olympic Team. But on May 17, 1994 his life would be forever altered with one misstep over the hurdle. A faulty landing hyper-extended John's left knee, resulting in an injury severing the popliteal artery. An attempt to reconstruct the artery using a vein from his right leg failed; within days, gangrene turned the muscle black and amputation was suggested. The alternative was a useless left knee and ankle, which would confine him to a wheelchair. Though devastating, the injury did not stop John. With a strong faith in Christ and the support of his wonderfully supportive wife Alice, he chose amputation. Through the use of a plastic prosthesis, he would walk again - and eventually run.

During his long journey to recovery, John began swimming for cardiovascular fitness as part of his rehabilitation program. It was during the first few swim sessions with his personal coach that an inspiration to compete again was born. After only 18 months of rehabilitation and training, John qualified for and made the 1996 Paralympic Team as a swimmer, competing in the games in Atlanta, Georgia. In addition to qualification for the paralympics, he competed in the finals of the 4x400m-medley relay, swimming the anchor. The Paralympic Games, titled as such because they are held parallel to the Olympics, are a worldwide competition for people with disabilities.

While watching closed-circuit television in the Athlete Village during the 1996 Paralympics, John observed athletes with one leg running on the track. Excited by what he saw, an idea was birthed and after being fitted with a running prosthesis in late 1997, he set a goal of competing in track and field at the 2000 Paralympic Games, in Sydney, Australia. John did not only begin to run he began to make history. Two years after taking his first running step, he earned the Silver Medal in the long jump at the 2000 Paralympic Games setting the American Long jump record in the process with a distance of 5.41 meters (18.4feet). The current world record is 5.57 meters. He also took 5th place in the 100 and 200m dashes.

John's life has truly come full circle in his transformation from All-American long jumper, to Paralympic Silver medalist. As an inspirational and motivational speaker, applying lessons learned through times of testing is the focus of his speaking engagements, where he shares his powerful keynote talk, "Hurdling Adversity", with audiences young and old. He is a spokesperson for The Hartford Insurance Company, The American Plastics Council, The Ohio Willow Wood Company, and Disabled Sports USA. He has been featured on numerous national television programs to include PAX TV's "It's A Miracle", with Richard Thomas, FOX's "The Edge", with Paula Zahn, NBC's "Weekend Today Show", with Sara James, and MSNBC's "Morning Blend", with Solidad O'Brian. He has also been profiled in the Washington Post, Sports Section, and the Washington Kid's Post newspapers several times.

Subsequent to his 1994 amputation, John remained active with soldiers, first as a civilian employee of the Army working as a Sports Specialist with the Army's World Class Athlete Program. He worked as a Program Specialist with the U. S. Army B.O.S.S. (Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers) Program at CFSC Headquarters. In 2003 he took a job with the United States Olympic Committee and now manages the Paralympic Academy Youth Outreach Program and the Paralympic Military Sport Program serving primarily those members of the Armed Forces who were injured in the war against terrorism.