



Personal Best Athlete Profile

Elli Edgar, 65

Phoenix, Arizona

Color me joyful

Elli Edgar is a colorful character who colors for a living. Starting from a background working in traditional tattoo parlors and a stint in the costume and makeup fields in Hollywood, Elli's love of aesthetics led her to the permanent makeup profession. She has owned a full service salon for men and women in downtown Phoenix for many years, and in 1991 opened Painted Ladies within that business to serve accident victims and especially breast cancer patients referred by plastic surgeons for needed areola pigmentation on implants after mastectomies. Along the way she has done charitable work for breast cancer prevention.

Coming from a large Italian family, it's no surprise that people are the most important thing in her life. Elli has a group of 25 high school classmates that have been getting together monthly for 47 years. One of them, Kathy Miller, shared her love of badminton and they have played together as long as they've been friends. They became serious about competition and qualified in 2003 for the National Senior Games Presented by Humana.

But the ultimate irony abruptly halted the team's plans: Elli was diagnosed with breast cancer.

In another ironic coincidence, both Elli and Kathy became caregivers for sisters who passed away within a year of each other. It's been a long ten years of recovery and regrouping, but the two made a vow to get to their first National Senior Games. This summer they will fulfill that vow. The pleasant irony? Elli was born in Cleveland and has family there. A tumultuous decade of challenges has now become a joyful journey to celebrate life for this Personal Best athlete with her best friend and playing partner.

You own a salon. You must be a people person.

I've been in Phoenix since I was a young girl and yes, I've made a lot of friends over the years. 47 years after graduating, I still have 25 high school friends that get together once a month for dinners. We call ourselves The Nice Girls Class of 65. One of those girls, Kathy Miller, is my best friend and partner in badminton. Both of us were PE majors in college and we always played some kind of sport growing up. Beyond that we are about as opposite as you can be. She's the sweet one and I'm the weird one that went to work in tattoo parlors. But to have our friendship thrive for all these years and to enjoy a sport together in our senior years is unbelievable.

Have you been to the National Senior Games before?

No, this will be our first time and it's so exciting. We were qualified to go ten years ago but my breast cancer came up so we had to bow out. Then both Kathy and I had sisters with serious health issues and we became caregivers for several years. Both passed away within a year of each other. I think that was really the motivation to get back into shape and go back with the sport.





Elli Edgar Personal Best Profile

Page 2

I have a badminton net up in my back yard and we had kept playing for fun, so last September I asked her if she wanted to make a serious effort to get back to the Nationals. Kathy was as ready as I was. But we discovered that the Arizona state games were over and we would have to go elsewhere to qualify. Our choices were Nevada, Oklahoma. or Hawaii so we went to Las Vegas and we came in first. It was unbelievable. I didn't even know at the time that the National Senior Games were going to be in Cleveland, and I was born there!

How special will it be to go back to Cleveland as a National Senior Games athlete?

I was the youngest in my family. My mother became ill and we moved to Phoenix for her health when I was ten. We left a huge Italian family behind, including my brother and sister who were older and didn't move with us.



My brother Tony DiNero is 81 and lives in Aurora now. I go back to visit with him every year. When we qualified I called him up and said "Buddy boy, start making the meatballs because we are coming to Cleveland!"

You know, when you're born somewhere your hometown is in your heart. I still absolutely love the Cleveland Indians. Kathy has never been there, so I will have to take her to Little Italy.

The whole family is excited. We are already getting it together to compete again. Win or lose, we're going to have the best time ever. Our team name is the Lean Green Machine and our rap names are K Klass for Kathy, and E Juice for me. I hope you can tell we have lots of fun with this.

It's all about the journey and making it a joyful one.

It's important to have a good attitude about aging. What's your perspective about that?

When I turned 65 it was like a light bulb went off. It was a realization that this isn't a dress rehearsal. I had just witnessed my sister pass away from diabetes and I was a little overweight and pre-diabetic. I said no, I don't want to be that. I'm at the steering wheel and need to do something about it.

I may be 65, but I don't feel like it, I don't look it and I'm not gonna be it! How's that for a quote? It's all mental. I tell the ladies The Fountain of Youth is a Ponce de Leon thing that's out there somewhere. It's all in our heads. It's all about how we perceive things, don't you agree?

I want to be a thriver, not just a survivor.

How did you become such a trusted and respected permanent makeup artist?

I worked in both tattoo parlors and in plastic surgeons' offices for almost ten years to get started. I also had some Hollywood experience in wardrobe and makeup. I used all that time as an apprenticeship to be a permanent makeup professional.



National Senior Games Association

Post Office Box 82059 ★ Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70884-2059
225-766-6800 ★ Fax 225-766-9115 ★ nsga@nsga.com

★ www.nsga.com



Elli Edgar Personal Best Profile

Page 3

When I opened Painted Ladies within my salon business it opened to me a world of wonderful women and men. I've been doing permanent makeup for 22 years working with many plastic surgeons and their mastectomy patients. I get the ladies at the last step of their medical journey and I make them feel normal again. Having implants doesn't do anything until you color them in. People think it's just about beauty. There's a whole joy that goes with restoring these women. When I do that I literally color their lives back to normal.

Ten years ago when I was diagnosed with breast cancer I thought "Dear God, can I get any closer?" He must have wanted me to be even more so on top of this than I was already doing.

My clients range from former Chief Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to average housewives to Hell's Angels, and I love and respect every person who sits in my chair. The Chief Justice is such a hoot, and she ended up presiding over the wedding to my current husband David 13 years ago. She couldn't actually legally do it as a federal judge so we got Arizona Chief Justice Ruth McGregor there too. She's married to a plastic surgeon I work with. Imagine getting married by two Chief Justices!

With that duo tying your knot the marriage is destined to last.

David is husband number four. I exhausted all my resources here in the United States so I had to go to Canada to find him!

[More Personal Best Profiles at www.NSGA.com](http://www.NSGA.com)

For more information:

Del Moon, NSGA Communications and Media
DMoon@NSGA.com
225.202.5719



National
Senior Games
Association®