

Where is She Now? Phoylin Vongkhamchanh

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A few times per year FigureRX magazine is lucky enough to come across a figure or fitness competitor who personifies both the ideals of FigureRX and the sport as a whole, but who has not stepped on stage for a while. Texan **Phoylin Vongkhamchanh** is one of those competitors. Phoylin first started competing when she was 21 years old, in Ms. Fitness and Fitness America competitions back when they used to appear regularly on ESPN. She then moved over to the NPC, winning her height class at several shows in 2001 and 2002 and the overall title at others. Phoylin competed at the national level in 2002 and 2003, at Junior Nationals and Team Universe, where she received a lot of attention from photographers and magazines and exhibited excellent muscularity, symmetry and poise.

Since then she has been out of the sport for a while, and we wondered why – so we decided to ask. We were very impressed with her initial answers and what she's been doing so we asked her to do a full interview The results are below, enjoy!



Phoylin's Fast Facts:

Nickname – Phoylin (no last name) like Madonna

Height – 5'1”

Weight – 120 lbs off season/ 115 lbs competition

Birth date – February 29, 1980

Home town – Dallas, Texas

Hair / Eyes – Brown / Brown

Favorite music – All types, depends on her mood

Favorite diet food – Rice Cakes

Favorite cheat food – Pizza

Current occupation – Owns and operates an insurance agency

Athletic background – flag football, basketball, volleyball, track, fast pitch softball, gymnastics, rock climbing, yoga.

Latest news – completed an HDTV yoga series, landed a character role in a commercial and a lead role for a new TV/web series currently in production.

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You have been training for how long and why did you start?

I have been training since 1999. I started training because my mother was diagnosed with kidney failure, but the doctors couldn't pin point what caused it. All I knew was, I had to change my lifestyle, and initially my general goal was just to live a healthier lifestyle so I wouldn't end up like my mother. Then I started getting comments from people at the gym asking me if I did fitness competitions like they saw on TV.... I had no idea what they were

talking about so I did some research and next thing I knew I was getting ready for my first competition in July of 2000 at the Ms. Fitness Texas competition. (I placed 5th!!!) That fueled my fire, and I was hooked on fitness competition.

What is your athletic background? Any notable achievements?

I have always been a well rounded athlete. I did it all from flag football, basketball, volleyball, to even running track and fast pitch softball! I won awards throughout high school for all my achievements. I have always followed the motto: focus, and over perform in whatever I do, and if I put my mind to it I can do anything. The only thing I have to admit I wasn't really good at was golf I guess joining because the coach was hot and not because I wanted to actually play golf was a good reason I never excelled! In addition to sports, I have been dancing and performing since I was 5 years old.

Briefly, what have you been doing for the past 2-3 years?

Oh I have done a little of everything, where do I even start!!! A few of the highlights include:
2004 – Started my insurance agency, and got married in Jamaica
2005 – Had a beautiful baby boy
2006 – Took lots of vacations and traveled many places in/outside of the United States.
2007 – Just completed shooting a yoga series airing on HDTV (so for you guys out there that want to see me bend like Gumby...check it out.). I also landed a lead role for a new TV/ web series currently in production and a character role in a gaming commercial (shooting TBD).

Phoylin's Contest History:

2000 Ms. Fitness Texas Championships – 5th Place
2001 Fitness America Pageant – 3rd Place
2001 FAP Texas Fitness Pageant – 4th Place
2001 NPC Texas Figure Championships - DNP
2001 NPC Red River Classic – Figure short, 1st
2001 NPC Red River Classic – Fitness short, 1st
2002 NPC Iron Games – 1st Figure short/Overall
2002 NPC The Heart of Texas – 5th Figure short
2002 NPC Ronnie Coleman Classic – 1st Figure short
2002 NPC Junior Nationals – Figure short, 13th
2002 NPC Team Universe – Figure short, 19th
2003 NPC Junior Nationals - Figure short, 16th

Phoylin's Major Fitness Media Coverage:

Planet Muscle – Hot Bodies of Fitness - March 2006
Flex Magazine – Flex 'n' Femme – July 2003
Ironman - Pump & Circumstance - May 2003
Women's Physique World - Barry's Beauties - January 2003



What is your current occupation and how long have you been doing it?

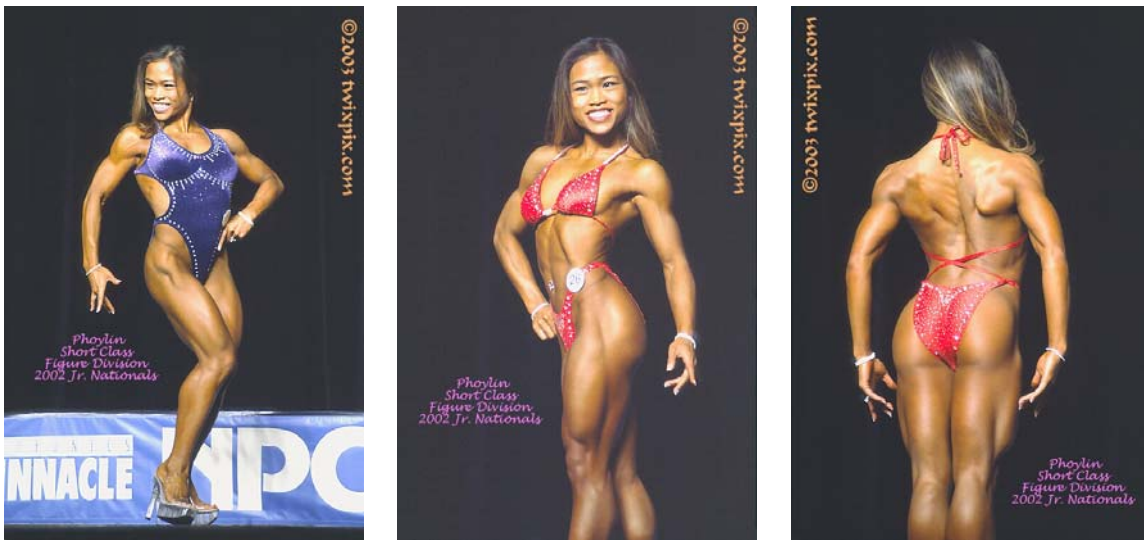
I have owned and operated my insurance agency for the last 3 years.

What is your academic and professional background?

North Lake College (Business Management)
Property & Casualty/Life & Health Insurance Licensed (Texas & Nevada)
Financial Services and Securities Licensed (Series 6 & 63)
Theater / Stage Experience and Television/Film Experience
Print and Promotional Modeling Experience

Do you still train regularly? If so, what is your training philosophy?

I still train, just not as “hard core” as I used to train for competitions. Currently, I always do light weights with high reps. I do a lot of yoga, and love that stair master, just 30 minutes a day keeps the dimples away! I tend to have naturally bulky muscle, and because I am trying to become more mainstream...I don't work with heavy weights. It's so easy for me to gain size, all I have to do is work with heavy weights and bump my protein intake, and my muscles will get bigger.



Phoylin competing at the NPC Junior Nationals (courtesy of Twixpix)

Why did you decide to stop competing? What were the trade-offs that you considered?

Competing started out as more of a hobby for me...then it started to take over my life and I became obsessed with training, dieting and competition. I worked so hard to excel, I pushed so very hard at every national competition and didn't even come close to placing...so I took a step back one day and realized WOW, if I just put this much effort and dedication into a business, I would be wealthy! If I started my own business, there wouldn't be any subjective and politically-based judging. Pure hard work and dedication would deliver me the results I deserve...so I refocused my energy into my business, and so far it has really paid off. I love fitness and figure competitions, and would someday love to compete again, but it gets to be pretty expensive “hobby” after you figure in your time, food, nutritional supplements, posing suits, and travel costs.

Would you like to start competing again, and if so what circumstances would influence your decision?

I would walk on stage again in a heartbeat if I had one or more sponsors to help pick up the expenses of competition. I love being on stage even if I never get called out by the judges, I do it more for the audience and for my fans all over the world. I also love it when I get e-mails after competitions some tell me that I just have to show my face more to the judges, some say I need to do drugs to get bigger, but at the same time some say I don't need to come in as "ripped." I even had a judge tell me to change my shoes! So who know what the judges are looking for? That's why if I compete again, I will go into it with the same positive attitude and energy. I will still grace the stage as if I am the winner, to have lots of fun but not expecting to win, most importantly... to be a positive influence and motivation for people around the world.

What do you consider to be the strengths of your physique? Weaknesses?

I think the strengths of my physique would be my arms and legs. My weakness would be my back/Lats. I have a harder time on my back because of my acute scoliosis.



What was your favorite (or proudest) moment on stage?

Ok this sounds so very incredibly crazy, but my proudest moment on stage was when I got called to receive my 5th place trophy at the 2002 NPC Heart of Texas, the crowd went absolutely crazy! They booed the decision...to the point that the MC had to get involved. It was great because once again I had the support of the audience and the fans. Even though I got 5th place, I felt as if I got first! After the competition everyone I saw congratulated me and told me I got first place in their minds, and then said they were going to talk to the judges for me. I was very happy, and I still have that 5th place trophy in front of my other trophies to remind me of that moment.

What is/was your favorite things about training or competing?

I love how training for a competition puts my mental and physical being to the test. I love seeing the changes in my body, I love sharing my expertise, and I love being a positive fitness role model.

What is/was your least favorite thing about competing?

I love fine dining and vacations...it's hard to do when you are on such a restricted diet, and when every work out is mandatory.

According to you, when you competed where did you find the best training and diet advice? Is there anyone in particular who you would like to thank?

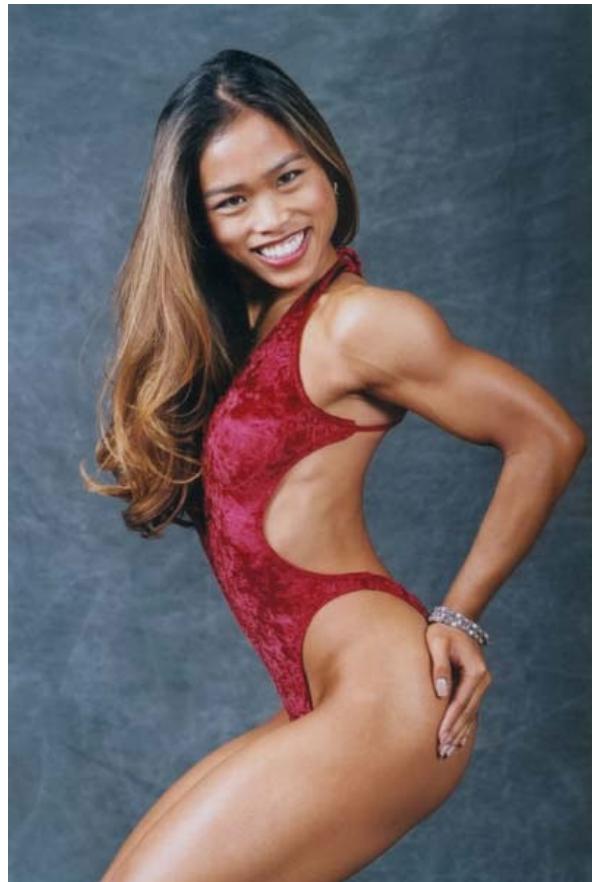
I would have to credit fellow competitors for different tid-bits of advice.

What are some of your skills and hobbies?

Certified personal trainer, specialized nutrition, dance, yoga, basketball, flag football, sprint and long distance running, biking, some gymnastics, rock climbing, bungee jumping, and sky diving. Acting, promotional & print modeling. Languages spoken include Thai, Laotian and some Spanish. But my very favorite thing is traveling.

What is your future goal in sports, in your job and in your life?

I am so very passionate in life, I want to do a little of everything! My goal is to own real estate all over the world...nothing extravagant, just a condo or small cottage here and there. I would like to have more children; I would like to start a nutritional supplement company, and would someday like to open an orphanage either in the states or overseas. I would also like to open a special homeless shelter dedicated to re-building lives. Oh yeah, and I want to start my very own fitness camp (can't give details...this is a fantastic idea that has not been done).



What is something that people do not generally know about you?

I can't really think of anything too outrageous or embarrassing...so I think people wouldn't know that I have bad arthritis pain on my ring finger, when it's cold I am miserable. I guess it was from all the sports I played, I broke and jammed my finger quite often.

Do you have any plans to bring back your web site, <http://www.phoylin.com/>?

Yes I would love to bring back my site, I get e-mails everyday. I am trying to find a reliable and reputable web person who will not rip me off. I paid someone a lot of money to do my site and it was never finished, it was a good chunk of money...and I just haven't explored my options since. Also, people from overseas were using my name and linking it to porn sites, I mean it *is* flattering that they think my name is worth using. The fact that my little brother, family, friends, and clients surf the internet all the time, what would they think?!? I was not really happy about that since I have NEVER done any porn in my LIFE. So if you Google my name and see porn on there, don't even bother wasting your \$\$\$ and signing up, it's a scam => you won't find naked pictures of me anywhere. Sorry.

Do people react to you lifting weights and being fit?

They always freak out...I am not sure if it's because I am Asian, or if it's because I am Asian, Female, and 5'1"???

What's your general philosophy in life? How does training help you in your daily life?

Training has helped me in EVERY aspect of my life. I believe it's all a domino effect. I think that if I feel good, look good, and stay healthy it makes me happy with my personal and professional life. It really shows in a person inside and out, that's why I always sign my letters "Health & Happiness."



What are your favorite supplements, then and now?

I love Optimum Whey vanilla protein powder, I use it everyday. I also can't live without the very wonderful cup of Starbucks black coffee that keeps me going.

Are there any current IFBB and NPC competitors or others in the industry who you follow and/or admire?

I have and always will admire Leslie Russell, she is an **A class lady**, and have always been an inspiration to me even back when she competed in the Fitness America Pageant. I also admire June Munroe for her strength and perseverance.

Is there anything else that you would like for people to know?

I do look forward to stepping back on stage one day! I never thought I was so popular until I left the fitness scene and kept getting an abundance of emails inquiring about my next photo shoot or competition. I promise you, I will be back one day...I'm just not really sure how soon.

Photographer credits: James Cook, Reg Bradford, Barry Brooks, and Danny Corn

We welcome any comments that you may have about this article at FigureRX@verizon.net.