



Svetla Krasteva

World Acrobatics Society 2006 Legend

Acrobatic Gymnastics

Many of our WAS Legends cross-over and excel in several WAS disciplines; Svetla Krasteva is one such example. From artistic gymnastics, acrobatic gymnastics, to stunt work and the circus arts ...she did it ALL!

Svetla was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria in 1961. As a petite, energetic, young girl, her natural talent was soon recognized allowing her attend a branch of the National Sports School, which was located in her city. She specialized in **artistic gymnastics** and **acrobatic gymnastics**, earning a double Master of Spots degree. She spent eight years as a member of Bulgaria's Olympic artistic gymnastics team, specializing in floor exercise and balance beam and winning many national and international titles.

Afterward she joined the Bulgarian National Acrobatic Gymnastics team and for the next four years, excelled in women's trio competition. This led to several years of work in various **circuses** around the world including *Circus Medrano, Brazil Jack, Circus Vargas, and Ringling Brothers Circus*. It was Ringling that brought her to the U.S., where she was part of a Bulgarian performing troupe.

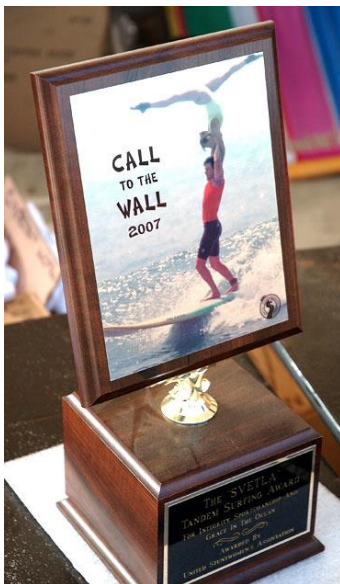
Svetla left the circus in 1991 and was soon invited to Los Angeles by Bob Yerkes to work in the motion picture business as a **stuntwoman**. She learned, and mastered all the tools of her new profession, from the air ram, descender, ratchet and, decelerator, to the Russian swing, trampoline, teeterboard, trapeze and tumbling.

For the next eleven years, as a proud member of the United Stuntwomen's Association she worked in numerous films, TV shows, and commercials where her diminutive 4'10", 90 lbs. size allowed her to stunt double for many child actors. Svetla did commercials for McDonald's, Coke, Miller Beer, American Express, and Geico. Her TV shows included: *Touched by an Angel, Malcolm in the Middle, Days of Our Lives, Texas Ranger*, and many, many more. Her films included: *Titanic, Independence Day, Air Force One, Jingle All the Way, Batman 2, Batman Forever, The Grinch, Rush Hour 2* and, *Peter Pan*.



Svetla used her experience and love of hand-balancing to become a world-class **tandem surfer**, displaying her incredible athleticism on the waves at Malibu, Santa Cruz, in Australia, and in France. Representing Malibu Boardriders, Svetla and her surf partner Danny, won many trophies and even competed in the 1999 World Championships, held in Australia, where they finished a very close second for the world title.

The United Stuntwomen’s Association now gives a yearly award, at the “Call to the Wall” National Surfing Competition hosted by Malibu Boardriders, named “The Svetla Award. This award is given to the Tandem woman surfer showing “Grace, Dignity and Sportsmanship in the Ocean.”



Unfortunately, Svetla was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2000 and underwent the usual surgeries and treatments to save her life. She continued to work on a few films as her condition did not inhibit her abilities until she was in Australia working on the feature live-action film “Peter Pan”. That adventure was cut short when her tumor returned with a vengeance in the fall of 2002. She returned to her home in Culver City, California in November of that year and was cared for by her loving husband stuntman Tom Foley, family, and close friends until her peaceful death on Sunday, February 9, 2003.

In 2006, the World Acrobatics Society recognized Svetla Krasteva as a Legend in Acrobatic Gymnastics with her husband Tom accepting the award for his wife.

To view Svetla Krasteva’s WAS Legend video: <https://youtu.be/soWwzeglqH8>