



Katie McNamara

Katie McNamara graduated from Mira Costa High Beach (Manhattan Beach). She will be attending University of Washington. Major is undecided.

I walked at 8 months, ran the next day. There wasn't a car seat that could strap me in or a stroller I didn't climb out of. I never took naps (until I was a teen). My life began with activity. I was one of 3 kids under 3; I'm a twin with an "older" brother just 2 years ahead of me! I started gymnastics when I was 3. My parents saw me jump from a counter, do a 360 and land on a table. I started out winning a lot of meets and this continued through middle school.

My father fell suddenly ill when I was 13, he was unable to work, we sold our home and my mother is our sole support. We didn't know he would never work again, he was hospitalized for a long time and I didn't see him for almost a year. My parents separated, my mother is our sole support and I saw him only periodically. He is not the father I once knew, he was agitated, sometimes dressed strangely and we never knew when he was going to show up. He was diagnosed as clinically depressed as a result of his military service.

My mother is a Nisei and I am half Japanese, we always honored our heritage, even naming our dog after my favorite treat, "Mochi." My theme on my gym website and even my middle name Sayumi, has been cherry blossoms and it's a symbol that's represented good luck in my life. One meet, that was really competitive, we arrived at the hotel and its spring theme was the Osaka castle (where my grandparents are from) and cherry blossoms everywhere-this lifted my spirits and gave me inspiration. I ended up being a top qualifier into nationals.

My journey combines my fearlessness, talent, determination, resilience, confidence, faith, leadership and belief in team. Even with the long hours in the gym (over 20 hours a week, and at least a 3 hour round trip drive), I maintained strong academics, contributed to my community and I am the baker in my family. (Everybody loves my pancakes!)

Gymnastics is an expensive sport; however, since I was doing so well and kept my grades up, we knew it was a way for me to get into college. Due to the shortened season (no state, regionals or national competitions), I have not received an athletic scholarship from University of Washington. They offered me a walk-on spot which I accepted because I loved the school, coaches and future teammates. While my 2020 season was cut short, I was ranked in the top 10 nationally on beam, and I won the state all-around title last spring. I've won many state, regional titles and ranked nationally on beam and bars. Gymnastics and school are an escape for me and kept me on track despite my family situation.

Here is my gym website: <http://www.gym-style.com/katiemcnamara/>