

# Tom Terhaar LC '92

## Leading US Women's Rowing to Gold...Again!

by Marty Siederer LC '77

When the USA Olympic women's rowing team won the gold medal at the Summer Games in London, the team truly had "Jersey Roots and Global Reach" with their coach Tom Terhaar LC '92 and his wife Jennifer Dore-Terhaar RC '93 having Rutgers ties. Rowing has a long history at Rutgers, starting in 1864, when it was the college's first organization.

In 2004, Tom Terhaar coached the U.S. women's eight to a world record in the heat and a silver medal at the Olympic Games in Athens. It was the first time the U.S. had won an Olympic medal in the event in twenty years. Terhaar had been named head women's coach in 2001, and in just his second year he guided the women's eight to a gold medal at the 2002 FISA World Championships in Seville, Spain. It was a sign of great things to come. After winning the silver in 2004, Terhaar's team of eight captured Olympic gold in Beijing in 2008, and then again in 2012 — part of an unbeaten streak in international competition that began in 2006.

A ten-time National Team member and two-time Olympian, Jennifer Dore-Terhaar earned numerous dis-

tinctions as a world class athlete. In addition to rowing in the Quad in the 1996 and 2000 Olympics, she won silver medals in the Eight at the 1993 and 1994 World Rowing Championships and stroked the U.S. Gold Medal Eight in 1995. Jen returned to elite rowing in 2003 to once again represent the U.S. at the World Championships in the Women's Eight.

Both Tom and Jennifer reside in the Princeton area, with Tom continuing his work as the U.S. rowing team coach and Jennifer now a teacher in the West Windsor-Plainsboro school system. Tom is already preparing to defend the US women's team's gold medal at the 2016 Olympic games to take place in Rio de Janeiro, and took a few minutes out of his busy schedule to share memories of his days on the Banks:

**Q. What are your memories of Rutgers?**

**A.** There are quite a few. I remember the first time I knew I wanted to go to Rutgers: after watching the Rutgers varsity men's lightweight crew team defeat Princeton and Cornell in a meet held in Ithaca, NY in the spring of 1986. The classes and professors at Rutgers were all great. I have lots of memories from rowing: the practices, parties and races — all of those were lots of fun.

**Q. What life experiences from your time at Rutgers have helped you with your rowing coaching?**

**A.** I learned that if you want something, you just have to put in the time to get it. Nothing at Rutgers was a given; you had to take full responsibility for your academic career. Rutgers was a great education in real life in that there were opportunities but you had to earn them and make the most of them when they came up.

**Q. What academic experiences from your time at Rutgers have helped you with coaching?**

**A.** Creativity! For me, coaching is less of a science and more of a creative process. You have an end goal and you know where you want to go. As a coach, we are always looking for new ways to get toward our goals. I had quite a few passionate and creative professors at RU that were unlike any teachers I had ever had before, and they helped stimulate my thought process towards motivating myself and others to reach a higher goal.



**Q. Your wife is also a Rutgers graduate. How did you meet?**

**A.** At a rowing party.

**Q. Do you get back to campus for alumni activities?**

**A.** Not too often since the men's crew team was changed to the status of a club sport. My wife and I did run a half-marathon a few years ago for Rutgers Athletics.

**Q. Do you keep in touch with other Rutgers alumni?**

**A.** Yes, they are my closest friends. We get together as often as possible with the people from all over the country that I got to know while rowing at Rutgers. They are great friends, accomplished professionals and very, very funny people.

**Q. What are your leisure time activities?**

**A.** Our four children...and sleep.

**Q. What kind of welcome did you and the team receive when you returned from London?**

**A.** I came home right after the Olympic rowing events to be with my family, so it was a nice private homecoming. Our fourth child, Peter, was born in early July. The members of the rowing team have been getting great press coverage and enjoying the attention. ✨



USA WOMEN'S COACH TOM TERHAAR ALLOWED THE WOMEN TO TOSS HIM IN THE LAKE AFTER THEY RETURNED TO THE DOCK FROM THEIR GOLD MEDAL-WINNING RACE. HE SAID THE WATER WAS "ACTUALLY REALLY NICE". ASKED LATER IF HE'D BROUGHT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES, HE SAID "NO. [SMILE] RAIN PANTS." PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES.