

It's the first step that's the doozy...

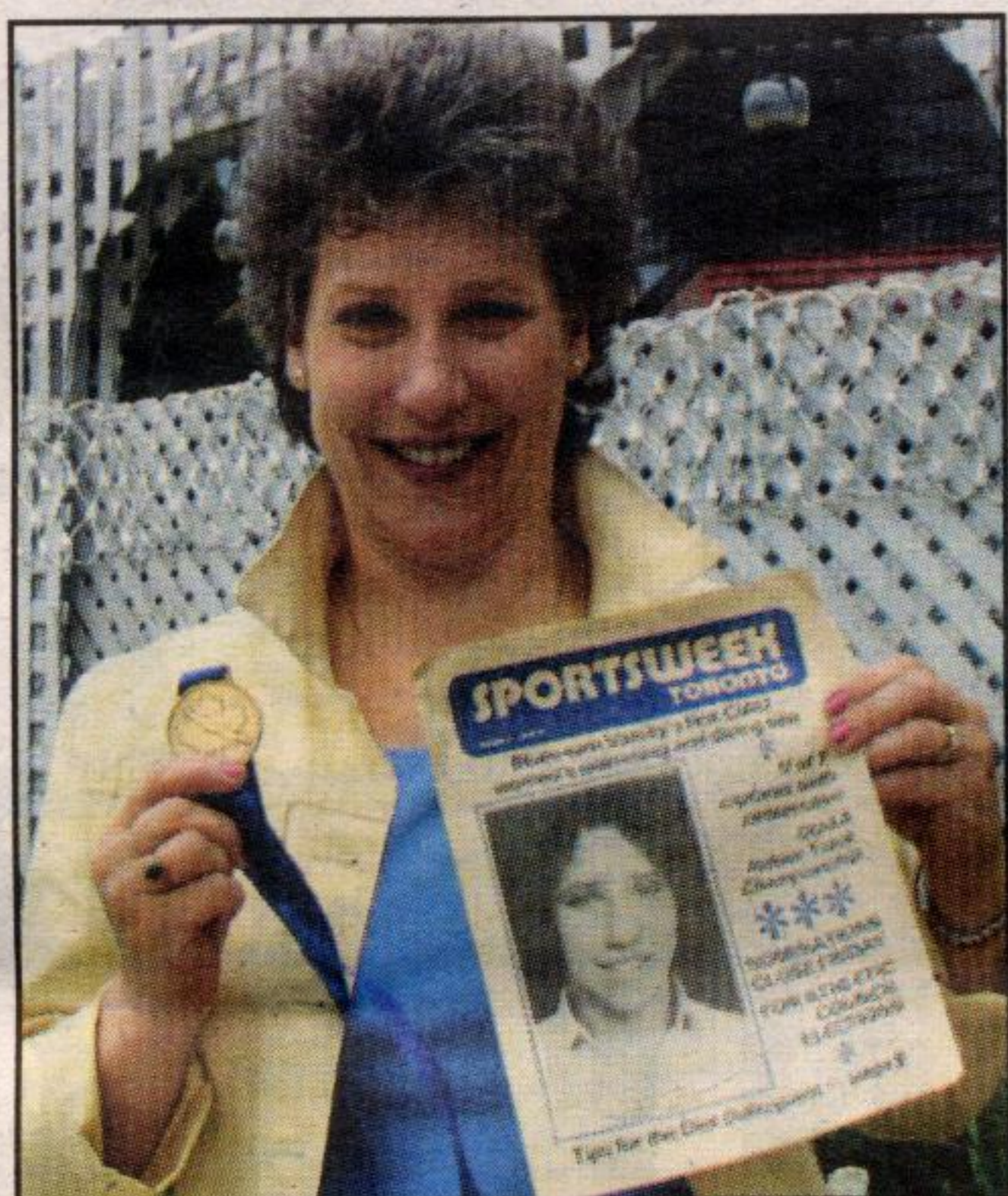
By DONNA DANIELI

You'd never know by looking at her that Stephanie Kimmerer used to hurl herself off 30 foot towers on a regular basis and the Moffat wife and mother of two will be recognized for that on June 1, for her outstanding achievements as a diver.

While a student at the University of Toronto, Stephanie was the first Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) diving champion. She won a gold medal in the one metre dive and a silver medal in the 3 metre dive in her first year and was undefeated in Ontario for four years in a row in university level competitions. She earned the CIAU Female Diver of the Year award two years in a row and represented Canada throughout her career in Switzerland, Mexico, Sweden, Austria and Bulgaria. She would even have participated as part of the Canadian Olympic team had Canada not decided to boycott the Moscow Olympics. Not bad for someone who initially took up diving because there were no age restrictions.

"When I was 11, I was taking swimming lessons and I had gone as high as I could go for my age," Stephanie explains. "You had to be 14 to take part in the bronze level." She was invited to participate with the Etobicoke Diving Club instead and discovered a passion for the sport of diving. "There I'd be on the bus after school," she laughs. "I'd have my school bag, along with my diving equipment and eat the dinner my mother packed each day for me." One day a week of practice quickly turned into two, then three, then more and more. When the Etobicoke Olympium Pool was initially built, Stephanie was the first person to dive off of its 10-metre platform, an event that was caught as the front page photo for the Globe and Mail. It was at the Olympium that she won her first gold medal.

Sadly, she was injured during the Canadian Winter Diving Championships in Point Clare in 1981. Diving from the ten metre platform, she cracked her AC joint



and had to drop out of the competition. "I think after my injury, I just didn't have it in me anymore," she says wistfully.

Though her diving days may be behind her, Stephanie is thrilled, not just for the upcoming induction into the University of Toronto's Sports Hall of Fame, but for the memories the event has stirred up. "This honour has given me a real boost of confidence," she says. "I'm feeling like I could conquer anything right now."

Just last week, she took a trip down memory lane as she, along with her husband Mark and their two sons Luke and Jake, made a special trip back to the Etobicoke Olympium Pool. There, she and her family climbed together to each of the 3, 5, 7 1/2 and 10 metre platforms. "At each level, the kids and I walked to the edge and peered over," Stephanie recalls. "It was so important for them to see what I used to do. This whole experience has reminded me that I can do anything I put my mind to. And that my children know that aspect of me is in them as well, and they can face anything."

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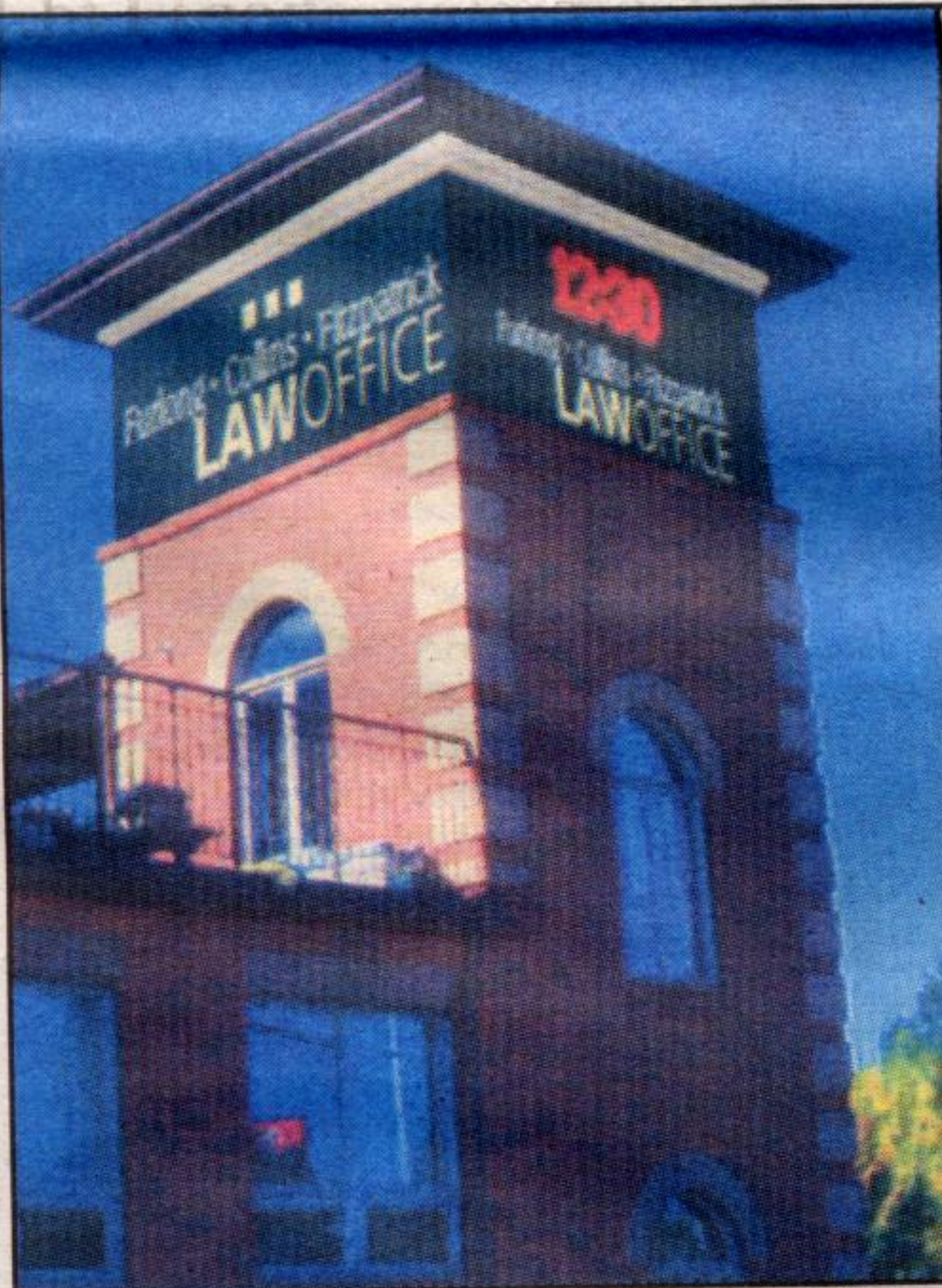
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