

The south zone adopted a slogan this year....FIND YOUR JOY. In remembrance of our beloved Joy Cushman we tried to remind each other that through all the struggles this year, we need to each remember why we love this sport and why we continue to be involved. Finding our joy (and keeping it) is critical for our long term sustainability, even when it seems impossible.

We lost one of our most ardent supporters when John Valerino (Lorraine's husband of 40 years) passed just before zone champs. John did so much to support not only the Lakeland Flamingos and Lorraine's obsession with this sport, but also for the state of Florida and many, many meets held in the area over all these years. We were happy to get to love on Lorraine as she traveled with her club to the meet, because John wouldn't have had it any other way. #SouthZoneFamily

We congratulate this year's South Zone award recipients:

- Coach of the Year: Amy Oliver-Gardens Synchro
 - Amy becomes our first Coach of the Year who was previously awarded the Zone's Athlete Spirit Award
- Contributor of the Year: Victoria Anderson
 - Victoria becomes the only person ever awarded this twice
- Athlete Spirit Award: Manu Pindi, Pirouettes of Texas

Our 2023 South Zones Champs went off without a hitch and on time due to the 100's of hours of prepping by Victoria Anderson and the fabulous meet management staff of Barbara McNamee, Meredith Simpson, Sam Elhart and Beth Moore. And, the phenomenal scoring team of Rebecca Phillips, Jeanie Saunders & Maggie Downey. We congratulate Florida Elite for winning the 13-15 high point award and the Pirouettes of Texas for winning the Junior and Overall high point awards!

Congratulations to all our coaches for surviving all of the challenges and changes this year and doing so extremely well. Congrats to the south zone athletes on their successes at each of the national meets this year (and especially US JO's) and to those training and competing with the national teams. Thanks to all our judges and coach/judges who put in so much time to learn everything they could to make this season a success.

Congrats to our 4 new zone judges Kalina Yordanova, Grasy Noriega, Laura Alt, and Ginny Whisenhunt. Congrats also to Caroline Karolinko who has joined the national judge roster.

Thanks to the zone board for keeping everything on track-nothing would happen in the south without these folks: Victoria Anderson, Beth Moore, Camille Albrecht, Diana Wolff, Cheryl Cook and athletes Emma Kim, Veronica Holguin & Giana Sercu. Special thanks to Steph Sanchez for all she does to help! Special thanks to Diana who rolls off the board after convention and after many years of service to the board. But, she's not going anywhere and we'll be seeking her expertise as always!

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Mitchell
South Zone Chair