



## Athlete Profile (Local)

### Michael Moore – A Life-Changing Event

This July in Omaha, Fremont, Neb., resident and Vietnam veteran Michael Moore, 60, will compete in his thirteenth National Veterans Wheelchair Games. At the event, he plans to compete in the air guns and nine-ball competitions.

Born in South Omaha, Moore is a 1966 graduate of South High School. Married to wife Peggy for 36 years, the couple has three grown children. While serving in the Marines, he also attended Santiago Junior College in Santa Anna, Calif., and after completing his military service, Bellevue University.

Moore joined the Marine Corps in 1966 right out of high school, because, he says, his brother had joined the Navy. From 1966-68, he served as a radio operator, reenlisted from 1972-1979 and retired from military service in 1979. Although he reenlisted with the intention of making the military his career, Moore contracted cancer while still serving on active duty. In 1976, the diagnosis led to having his right leg amputated below the knee. "This was a life-changing event for me," Moore said. Following the surgery, he received rehabilitation and prosthetics training through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA.) Later, he was hired by VA, becoming chief of prosthetics at a VA medical facility in Kansas. In 1999, he retired from the Omaha VA Medical Center after 28 years of government service.

Since then, Moore has dedicated his life to helping other veterans with disabilities. While he was working for VA in Kansas, he attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Milwaukee, Wis. The year was 1982, and his first competitions were in the weightlifting and field events. He prepared for them by working out five days a week. The hard work paid off, earning Moore a number of gold and silver medals. Since then, he has competed in the National Veterans Wheelchair Games eleven other times in the discus, shot-put and weightlifting competitions. For two years, he also competed as a member of the U.S. Amputee Athletic Association, representing the United States. as a weightlifter in the 1992 Paralympics in Barcelona, Spain, and at the Wilkenson Sword Games in Gateshead, Scotland. "It was an honor to represent our nation," Moore said. He has also participated in winter sports activities in Gunnison, Colo. "That is a ball, and it will change your outlook on life," he says.

Because of extensive neck and back surgeries he has undergone through the years, Michael Moore's doctors can only clear him to participate in the air guns and nine-ball events at the 28<sup>th</sup> National Veterans Wheelchair Games this year. "It breaks my heart that I can only do those two events this time," he says. Despite those limitations though, Moore continues to encourage and help train other local wheelchair athletes for their events in July. This year, he will also act as the coach and local coordinator for *Team Nebraska* at the 28<sup>th</sup> Games. Eager to see old friends at the event, Moore continues his workouts and is looking forward to the strong camaraderie among the competitors that this event always inspires.