

# Pat Panichas

*2022 Spotlight Recipient*

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Pat Panichas is an accomplished professor, gymnastics coach, athlete, administrator and judge. Pat taught for 45 years in the Exercise Science and Health and Movement Sciences Department at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) having recently earned the status of Professor Emeritus. She was the Women's Gymnastics head coach for 28 years, leading the Owls to regional and national prominence. During her career as the Owls' head coach, her teams won 10 Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference (ECAC) Division II Championships, was ECAC Coach of the Year multiple times and the 1998 USA Gymnastics National Collegiate Coach of the Year. Athletes under her tutelage earned many honors including AIAW – All-around Champion, NCAA - Vault Champion, numerous athletes received All-American Honors for athletics and over 25 Southern women earned Academic All-American honors. Pat herself competed both nationally and internationally, representing the USA at the World University Games in Turin, Italy.

Pat served on the NCAA Women's Gymnastics Committee and also served as chair of the committee. She has volunteered her time at the state, regional and national levels and served on the National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges (NAWGJ) National Governing Board. Pat continues to serve on multiple USA Gymnastics committees including her role on the Women's Technical Committee, developing rules, educational materials, presenting at regional and national conventions and assisting with the training and certification of women's gymnastics officials.

Pat is a 2007 inductee into the SCSU Athletic Hall of Fame, a 2008 recipient of the National Association of Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS) Pathfinder Award, a 2010 inductee into the NAWGJ Hall of Fame, and a 2016 Connecticut Gymnastics Hall of Fame inductee.

As a Brevet-rated official, Pat has judged the USA Gymnastics National Championships and Olympic Trials since 1996. She has judged World Cup Competitions, World Championships, Pan American Games and had the honor of being selected to judge the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Demonstrating continued dedication to the students, Pat was recently involved in helping establish the "Believe Fund" at SCSU which is designed to help College of Health and Human Services students who find themselves in emergency financial need.

Pat earned her BS in elementary education, MS in physical education and 6<sup>th</sup> year in Administration from SCSU and has done additional graduate study at the University of Connecticut.