

## **Michelle Akers, 2008 US Youth Soccer Hall of Fame Inductee**

Michelle Akers built her foundation in soccer while playing US Youth Soccer. At a young age, she began playing for California Youth Soccer Association. In the fourth grade, she moved to Washington where she played for Washington State Youth Soccer Association on the Shorelake Thunderbirds team and eventually on the Washington State Youth Soccer Association Flyers until she finished playing at the Under-19 level.

In high school, her team won the state championship in 1983 and she was a three-time All-American.

Akers continued playing at the collegiate level where she was a four-time NSCAA All-American at the University of Central Florida. In 1988, she became the first woman to win the Hermann Trophy.

For 15 years, Akers was an integral part of the U.S. Women's National Team. In 153 appearances, she scored 105 goals, putting her as the second all-time goal scorer in the history of the Women's National Team.

In 1999, she was named FIFA Women's Player of the Century, as the top female soccer player in the world.

Akers played in the 1991 and 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup. In 1991, she scored 10 goals, five of which were in one game. She led the U.S. Women's National Team to their first world championship after scoring the only two U.S. goals in the final game against Norway. Her performance won her the Golden Boot Award and she also received the Silver Ball Award, which is given to the world championship's second best player.

In 1996, she was a part of the popular U.S. women's team that captured the gold medal in Atlanta, Ga.

Her work in soccer extends beyond the field. Akers authored two books, *Standing Fast with Tim Nash* and *Face to Face* with Judith A. Nelson. She is the founder of Soccer Outreach International, an organization that teaches people how to integrate faith and sport into their daily life.

Akers retired from professional soccer in 2000.

