

# Kicking Off Speaker Series

## Louganis candidly revealed personal trials and victories

by Danielle Murphy  
Editor in Chief

Letting go of secrets. . . homosexuality, AIDS, domestic violence and low self-esteem.

Olympic great Greg Louganis offered a candid view of his life Monday, opening the 1996-97 Speaker Series at Penn State-Behrend.

Louganis has taken his lecture, *Breaking the Surface*, to college campuses across the country stressing the importance of safe sex among young adults.

"I encourage them to love themselves enough to protect themselves in regard to HIV," he explained. "A lot of times what I'm seeing, especially with young people, is it coming down to self esteem issues."

According to Louganis, low self esteem may contribute to cavalier attitudes toward AIDS, putting many young people at risk. "HIV does affect us all," he said.

Louganis also discussed the secrecy that has veiled his life away from the Olympic limelight, mainly homosexuality and HIV.

"Letting go of secrets, or as some people say--coming out. The first person you have to really come out to yourself," he said.

For Louganis that happened at the University of Miami, in the theater department. "So it was pretty safe," he joked.

As a member of the US Diving Team, Louganis found support from his team mates, but did encounter discrimination.

**"HIV does affect us all."**

**-Greg Louganis**

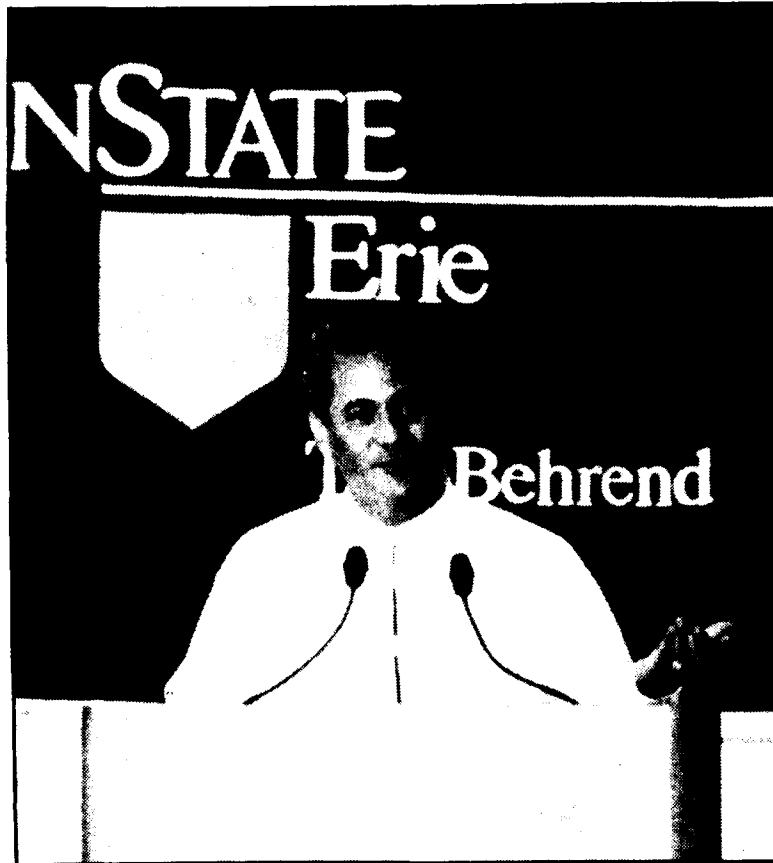
"US diving has always been very supportive of me and accepting of who I am," he said.

However on international trips, some team members did not want to room with a homosexual.

"I don't know what they were thinking," Louganis explained. "As if I was going to attack them or something...They should be so flattered."

Homosexuality was only one bag of emotional luggage for Louganis.

"You'd think that would be the coming out story," he said. "That's probably a good enough one but I also was carrying another secret with me--that I was



Olympic great: Greg Louganis shared a very frank look at his life Monday, starting the 1996-97 Speaker Series.

HIV positive."

In 1988, five months before the Olympics in Seoul, Louganis tested positive for the HIV virus.

"I was ready to pack my bags, go home and do the honorable thing--lock myself in my house and wait to die," he said.

But Louganis did not bow out. Encouraged by his doctor and cousin, he continued training, winning two gold medals that year.

During the preliminaries in Seoul, Louganis hit his head during a dive and required sutures.

He has since been criticized for not disclosing his HIV status and possibly putting the doctor who treated him at risk.

According to Louganis, the doctor who treated his injury took all necessary precautions and does not hold any resentment toward Louganis.

"He [the doctor] is okay with it and his wife is okay with it," Louganis said.

Louganis did share his HIV status with his coach, Ron O'Brien, who was supportive.

O'Brien said, "We can do this, and do it together," Louganis remembered.

Louganis also addressed the physical abuse he endured by a former lover. During that relationship, Louganis was raped at knifepoint. Coupled with low self-esteem, he felt like he deserved the abuse.

"For a long time, I was convinced that I deserved it and I held that," he lamented.

In the years that followed, Louganis lost his father to cancer, lovers to AIDS and developed an addiction to painkillers.

Louganis has looked back on his life, describing the "experience of an intelligent victim who had to use his intelligence to survive."

## Survey says...

# Sex in college: Monogamous and Creative

American college students are having longer and more sexually creative relationships with a regular partner according to a new survey in a recent issue of *Playboy Magazine*.

The poll shows that nine out of ten students are sexually active--more than the Kinsey Institute's 1991 figures of 80 percent for men and 73 percent for women. About half of the college students surveyed are having sex at least once a week.

"Most of our respondents practice serial monogamy," according to "Playboy's College Sex Survey," by Marty Klein and James R. Peterson.

Designed to solicit unguarded answers about fantasies, emotions, public sex, masturbation, one-night stands, orgasm, oral sex and condoms, the survey showed that 57 percent of men and 71 percent of women said they had just one sexual partner in the past school year. About one-third of both the men and women, however, admitted to having intercourse with someone other than their steady partner.

Three out of four college students discuss sexual fantasies with their partners, according to *Playboy*.

Many have experienced such activities as spanking, tying someone up or using a mirror with a partner; fewer are familiar with such props as a blindfold or vibrator.

Sixty-six percent of the men and 45 percent of the women reported acting out an erotic scene from a mainstream movie. Some favorites: *Single White Female* and *Basic Instinct*.

While many students are trying to practice more responsible sex, various pressures conspire to frustrate even the best-intentioned attempts at making regular condom use easy and sexy.

"I hate when the guy just wants to put it inside me for a minute before he uses a rubber," says a 21-year-old student at Ferris State in Michigan. "It is uncomfortable to have to say no when you're trying to be lovable and doing something romantic. Having to be mean and say, 'No, you must wear a condom,' ruins the moment."

More than one-third of both male and female students have been tested for HIV, some because they want to know if they have the virus and others because their new partners wanted to know.

If AIDS disappeared overnight, however, 66 percent of women and 49 percent of men claimed their sex lives would not change.

To test the effectiveness of so-called "conduct codes" that ban intimate relationships between students and teachers, *Playboy* asked students if they ever had sex with an "authority figure."

Sixteen percent of the men and nine percent of the women admitted that they had. More than half of the men and 40 percent of the women said they had flirted with an "authority figure" at least once.

The survey also revealed that:

Almost half of both men

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