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JoAnn Wabisca:

A Woman of True Strength Celebrates Being in Her 40s by Taking on the World in the Kick-Butt Martial Art of Savate

Los Angeles, CA — August 6, 2004 — Unlike many people who work in Los Angeles, JoAnn Wabisca doesn't believe life ends after your twenties. In 2003, at age 44, she won the California Cup and the US National Championship in Boxe Française-Savate Assaut (French Kickboxing) in Chicago. And in July 2004, she represented the United States at the World Cup Competition in Europe, a tournament with over 200 competitors from over 40 countries. JoAnn, now 45, fought competitors less than half her age and won the title of World Vice-Champion. She was the only American to make it to the finals.

"I always wanted to experience a world class competition," says Wabisca. "This was my Olympics."

When she began martial arts classes in 1994, JoAnn, then a 35-year-old designer/make-up artist had no idea that her hobby would become not only a new career but also a new way of life. She became a certified instructor in Jeet Kune Do (the art developed by Bruce Lee), and was also one of the first women in the United States to achieve the rank of Silver Glove (the equivalent of black belt) in Boxe Française-Savate. From 1997–1998, she was president of the United States Savate Federation, another first for an American woman. What began as a quest for physical expression has become a true testament to hard work, determination, and strength of spirit.

JoAnn's love of martial arts drove her to excel. When a complete tear of the ACL, an injury that required surgery, kept her from competing in the 2002 World Championship, JoAnn continued to strive for what she wanted: a national championship and a spot on the team representing the US in the World Cup. On October 25, 2003, just one year after her knee surgery, she competed with the nation's top savateurs and earned her spot on Team USA.

JoAnn credits her Native American heritage (Cree from British Columbia) for giving her the strength of spirit she needed to compete. "When I was in the event, with all the competitors, it felt sacred and I felt very honored. I felt the best way to give honor back, both to the event and my opponents, was to be my very best and truly live and experience the moment."

JoAnn is now also performing in figure modeling competitions. At age 45 she feels she is in the best shape of her life. "Women in your 40s, 50s and up, celebrate your age! Desire, commitment to training, willingness to go through fears and frustrations, spirituality, breath, and meditation all helped me to work from a 'higher self.' In competition and life one is to become one with nature. To flow with nature you need to know who you are, separated from ego and to follow your intuition while connecting with your higher self and Creator."

In October 2003 and July 2004, JoAnn Wabisca showed the world that a woman in her 40s can not only excel as a competing athlete but can emerge as champion, proving that with the right mindset, no matter what your age, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

Joann and her husband, Ed Monaghan, own and manage Combative Arts Academy, a multi-system martial arts school in Los Angeles. For more information on JoAnn or the Academy, please contact Ed Monaghan: 310-652-8701.

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