

About Rudy Galindo . . .

Rudy Galindo is the 1996 U.S. men's figure skating champion and the first Mexican-American and the only openly gay man to hold that title. Rudy is also the 1996 World championship bronze medalist. In his autobiography, **ICE BREAKER**, Rudy tells of his heartbreaking struggle to achieve his dream of winning the gold medal.

Rudy Galindo was the youngest of three children born to working-class parents in East San Jose, California. His truck-driver father spent much of the time on the road, and his homemaker mother, who suffered from undiagnosed manic-depressive illness, couldn't on her own provide Rudy and his older brother and sister with the love and attention they needed. From the time he was an infant, Rudy's sister Laura filled that void.

It was at Laura's weekly ice skating lesson that five-year-old Rudy first fell in love with skating. Before long, he and his sister were taking joint daily lessons and entering local competitions. Rudy distinguished himself with his jumps and artistic style, moving up quickly through the ranks, and in 1982 became the novice national champion. With finances tight and recognizing that her brother had a better chance of being a national champion, Laura decided to give up figure skating and took a part-time job at Taco Bell to help support her brother's lessons.

At thirteen, Rudy began skating pairs with eleven-year-old Kristi Yamaguchi. From their very first lesson, they were a sensation on ice, and during their astonishing seven-year partnership they won two national pairs championships.

Upon returning to singles competition, Rudy was beset by a series of personal tragedies, including the death of his brother and a second coach from AIDS and the death of his father. He also struggled with alcohol and drugs and found himself in an abusive relationship. Not surprisingly, his skating suffered. Rudy was quick to blame his poor marks on judges whom he felt didn't appreciate his balletic style or the fact that he was an effeminate gay man. Overwhelmed and isolated, Rudy almost gave up.

Following a disastrous eighth-place finish at the 1995 national championships, Rudy took several months off and began teaching young skaters. During that time, he overcame his despair, rediscovered his passion for skating, and together with his sister, who became his coach, began his career anew. Rudy was determined to compete one last time at the 1996 championships, which were set to be held in San Jose. With the support of the home-town crowd, Rudy gave the flawless performance of a lifetime to capture the 1996 U.S. National championship. He then went on to win a bronze medal at the 1996 World championships.

Several months after winning his national title, Rudy decided to retire from amateur competition and turned professional. He won his first professional title at the Challenge of Champions. He is currently on tour with the 1997 edition of the Tom Collins Campbell's Soup Tour of World Figure Skating Champions.

About Eric Marcus, Author of Ice Breaker . . .

Eric Marcus is the co-author of Greg Louganis' #1 best-selling autobiography, *Breaking the Surface*. He is also the author of *Making History: the Struggle for Gay and Lesbian Equal Rights, 1945 to 1990*; *Is it a Choice?*; and *Why Suicide?*