

“IT’S A GREAT HONOR. I’M TOUCHED.”

PRITIKIN DIRECTOR OF NUTRITION JEFFREY NOVICK RECEIVES INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE-OF-THE LAST-DECADE AWARD

In early September, Jeff Novick, Director of Nutrition at the Pritikin Longevity Center & Spa®, will fly to his alma mater, Indiana State University, to receive the school’s Graduate-of-The Last-Decade Award.

One of Jeff’s former professors, Dr. Sarah T. Hawkins, nominated Jeff for the prestigious award for his many significant contributions benefiting communities throughout the United States and his outstanding achievements in the nutrition profession.

In his typical “aw shucks” attitude toward himself, Jeff simply says, “It feels good. It’s a neat stamp of approval for a decision I made several years ago that many at the time thought was downright nuts.”

“GO SEE A PSYCHIATRIST, JEFF.”

In 1992, Jeff, in his late 30s, had a fantastic job at Kraft Foods – great pay and great benefits. “But I really didn’t like what I was doing. I wanted to go back to college and study nutrition”. Friends said, ‘Go see a psychiatrist, Jeff.’ After all, what’s the average salary of a dietitian? Plus, I was a single parent at the time. It was me, my 10-year-old daughter, and five long years of getting a BS in Nutrition and an MS in Nutrition with a concentration in Exercise Physiology.”

GOURMET, JACK LA LANNE

But Jeff took “what felt like a road off the edge of a cliff” because for Jeff it was the *right* road. Since he could remember, he’d been fascinated with food and fitness. “As a kid growing up in the sixties, my favorite T.V. shows were the Galloping Gourmet and Jack La Lanne.” At age 15, Jeff tore up his parents’ backyard and planted an organic vegetable garden. Then he turned his father’s garage into a gym.

“MY VOCATION”

In the 1980s Jeff discovered the health-restoring power of one diet in

particular: a low-fat diet rich in natural foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains – essentially, the Pritikin Eating Plan. A few years later, his father suffered two heart attacks. “He was in bad shape,” Jeff recalls. “So I got him going on a very low-fat, high-fiber diet. Within weeks, the improvement in his health was phenomenal. That’s when I decided that teaching this sort of lifestyle was what I wanted to do with my life. This was my vocation. And to do it I needed to go back to school.”

“THE HOSPITAL FOOD WAS HORRIFYING”

While working on his master’s degree and interning at Union Hospital in Indiana, Jeff’s vocation shifted into high gear. “The hospital food was horrifying. Patients were waking up after bypass surgery and getting bacon and eggs and hamburgers.” Jeff created and implemented an entirely new curriculum for the hospital, called the Nutrition Education Initiative, in which he and other dietitians taught workshops in heart-healthy eating to residents and medical students. The program was so successful that it is now a permanent part of the curriculum at the Union Hospital Family Practice Center. In 1997, the governor of Indiana honored Jeff with the Indiana State Public Health Excellence in Health Science Research Award.

“CHEF JEFF”

In the years that followed, Jeff has received national recognition for multiple academic accomplishments. The title he loves most, though, is “Chef Jeff.” At the Pritikin Center, guests flock to his always insightful, always humorous workshops on nutrition, supermarket shopping, cooking, and healthy restaurant dining. “My classes appreciate the fact that I’m not an ivory tower academic.”

Having worked in his twenties as



**Jeff Novick, MS, RD,
Nutrition Director at the
Pritikin Longevity Center®**

head chef of several restaurants, from TGI Fridays to fine French dining establishments, Jeff knows his way around a kitchen. He uses his real-world expertise to create meals that are not only healthy but delicious as well. Weekly, he takes participants on “field trips” to local restaurants for hands-on training in making good menu choices. “I love what I do,” says Jeff. “My work really is an expression of who I am.”

“YOU SAVED MY LIFE”

Jeff takes the greatest pride – not in his professional awards – but in, as he says, the individual. Daily, he receives e-mails from people worldwide thanking him for the many benefits they’ve received from his counseling. “I was in New York City recently when a Pritikin Alum came up to me, slapped me on the back, and roared, ‘JEFF, YOU AND THE PRITIKIN LONGEVITY CENTER SAVED MY LIFE.’ A year ago, he had almost died. Now, he’s 60 pounds lighter and off all medications. He had biked 10 miles that morning and bench-pressed 250 pounds. Clearly, he had a whole new lease on life.”

“People like that,” smiles Jeff, “make it all worthwhile.”