

Katy Galli '11



"Around here, however, we don't look backwards for very long. We keep moving forward, opening up new doors and doing new things, because we're curious ... and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."

-Walt Disney

By Alice Roche Cody

At her graduation from Oglethorpe University, Katy Galli '11 posted her mantra, *Keep Moving Forward*, on her mortarboard. In the months that followed, she clung to her rally cry while she mourned the end of her Division III athletic career as a track and field standout. After years of training and competing in sprints, jumps, and hurdles – breaking both high school and college records – she feared her best days were behind her.

"After I earned my degree, I struggled facing my life without athletics," Katy said. "I felt worthless. Was the best I have to offer left in the 400-meter oval? At the time I was 22 years old – is that all I can do? I had to figure out: Who am I after my sport is over? How do I navigate the next period of my life?"

Katy soon learned that she wasn't alone, many former athletes fear they'd already peaked. To seek solace, she immersed herself in their online blogs. But instead of hopeful guidance, she found sad stories of ex-competitors lamenting the end of their sports careers. Frustrated, she decided to change the discourse.

"I get that you're sad your career is over, but don't sit in it," she said. "I wanted to change the narrative from no longer being an athlete, to what's next. To learn how to succeed in the real world. Life doesn't end when your sport ends. You're more than just an athlete."

As a conversation starter, Katy founded the branded KMF (short for *Keep Moving Forward*) Collective, an online multimedia platform that features a *YouTube* channel and a weekly podcast, *Keep Moving Forward*, which presents interviews with former professional and collegiate athletes about their transition from jock to average joe. It's a heady lineup, with guests ranging from DeeDee Trotter, the USA track and field Olympic Gold Medalist, to Evander Holyfield, four-time boxing heavyweight world champ, to racecar maverick Mario Andretti. With her cheery voice, Katy connects easily with her guests, raising the dialogue to higher levels by asking about joy, loss, goal setting, and even, when she senses an opening, God. Sometimes, she includes her dog, Sully, in her convos. While Katy remains hesitant to pick a favorite track, she relished chatting with her childhood idol, Rudy Ruettiger, whose life story became the inspiration for the movie *Rudy*.

With its four-year run, *Keep Moving Forward* has logged more than 200 shows (239 at press time), with her 100th episode reserved for Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson. She's still hoping he takes up her open invite to join her on-air. "I've done different ploys to grab his attention, even launching a separate podcast called the *Athletes of the Titan Games*, where I interviewed contestants on his TV show," she said. "I believe it will happen!"

Katy juggles producing her podcast with her fulltime job and a coaching gig at CrossFit. The spots don't feel like work. "*Keep Moving Forward* is a calling placed on my life," she said. "Having a mission makes it easier."

As well as a role model. Her dad, Lou Galli, is also a former athlete and an entrepreneur. After graduating from Georgia Tech, he played ball in the minors. When he and his wife, Sandra, decided to start a family, he became a police officer and soon started a slew of side hustles. When his son, Nick's, ice hockey league fell prey to infighting, Mr. Galli started his own, the NJ Freeze, that's still going strong. There was a stint selling coffee with Katy's mom, before her father launched Seahawk Interactive, a successful software company. In fact, it was her dad who suggested Katy focus solely on track in high school so she could pursue her dream of competing in college. It worked.

Katy's senior year at Gill culminated with being named the Non-Public B state champ in the triple jump and 4x100 relay. She still holds individual school records in the triple jump and 100-meter hurdles and a shared record in the 4x400. In college, both her junior and senior years, she qualified for the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships in the triple jump and became the first Oglethorpe women's track and field contender to compete at the Division III national meet. In 2014, she also won an SAA championship in the 100-meter hurdles.

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With all this success behind her after college, as Katy searched for her path, she discovered CrossFit. "It was lights out," she said. Today she coaches at One Fellowship Fitness in Roswell, GA, where she strives to make a positive impact just as her Gill coaches, including Mike Chimes and Shelly LaBarre, made on her.

"When someone walks into CrossFit, I want it to be the best hour of their day," she said. "People are choosing to get up early or stay out late and spend time in the gym. As a coach, it's up to me to grant them their best hour. I hope I can leave them feeling happier than when they walked in."

Until the pandemic, Katy worked fulltime at a different gym, but it took a financial hit as COVID-19 spread. Forced to make a quick transition, she landed a job posted on *LinkedIn* with Symphony Technology Solutions, a small tech company Marietta, GA. As the marketing and media manager, she oversees growing the company's brand and enhancing its awareness, which includes, of course, launching new podcasts. Now working remotely from her Atlanta home, she has more free time to devote to her own podcast and focus on its growth. Katy's also receptive to new opportunities, such as zooming into Ms. LaBarre's open gym class to give the young students a pep talk. "I shared my Gill experience, then had the kids stand up and run in place and pretend to jump hurdles," she said. "It was a time to let go and be silly."

No matter Katy's audience, she hopes to always leave listeners smiling. At the end of every podcast, she asks her subjects, *What do you want to be remembered for?*

Katy's answer is simple: "I want to be remembered for filling the world with sunshine."

