



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
FULLERTON

Cindy Abbott
Health Science
Exercise Physiology





Cindy was born in **Beatrice, Nebraska**.

She received her B.S. and M.S. in Kinesiology at **Cal State Fullerton**. Graduating summa cum laude for both degrees.

She served as a graduate assistant and supervised the Exercise Physiology Lab from 1993-1996.

For her M.S. degree, Cindy **completed a thesis** under the direction of Dr. Carol Weinmann. It was subsequently **published** in *International Journal of Sport Psychology*.

Abbott, C.L., Weinmann, C.A., Bailey, C.I., & Laguna, P.L. (1999). The relationship between sport salience and choice behavior in Division I collegiate baseball players. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 30(3), 369-380.



Cindy's husband Larry is also a CSUF alumni. He taught SCUBA diving at CSUF for many years. Cindy happily volunteered as his divemaster.





Cindy was first hired at **Cal State Fullerton** as a lecturer in Kinesiology **in 1996**. She taught Physiology of Exercise Laboratory.

She then **transitioned** into teaching **Personal Health** in the Department of Health Science (now Public Health).

She ended up teaching at CSUF for **20 years** before retiring in 2016.



In 1993 Cindy started to notice some **health issues**. Those issues grew more serious and Cindy struggled to get a diagnosis. Finally in 2007, she was diagnosed with **Wegener's Granulomatosis**. It involves a cascade of events leading to inflammation of the blood vessels and organ damage. It is life threatening.



Cindy's response to a rare, fatal disease robbing her of her eyesight was **inspiring**. Instead of succumbing to natural feelings of fear and despair, Cindy **resolved** to prove that people with rare disorders were not limited in what they can **achieve**. At 51 years of age with a disease that required multiple medications to slow its progress, Cindy **set out to climb Mount Everest**.



Cindy and her husband Larry began spending their vacations **climbing mountains**. They summited Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Elbrus, and were attempting Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina when Cindy fell and **broke her leg**. The injury proved to be a significant but only temporary setback.



After a long period of training, in the spring of 2010, Cindy left for Nepal to climb the south side of **Mt. Everest** (29,035 ft).





On May 25, 2010, after 51 days on the mountain, Cindy became the 40th American woman to **successfully summit** Mt. Everest.

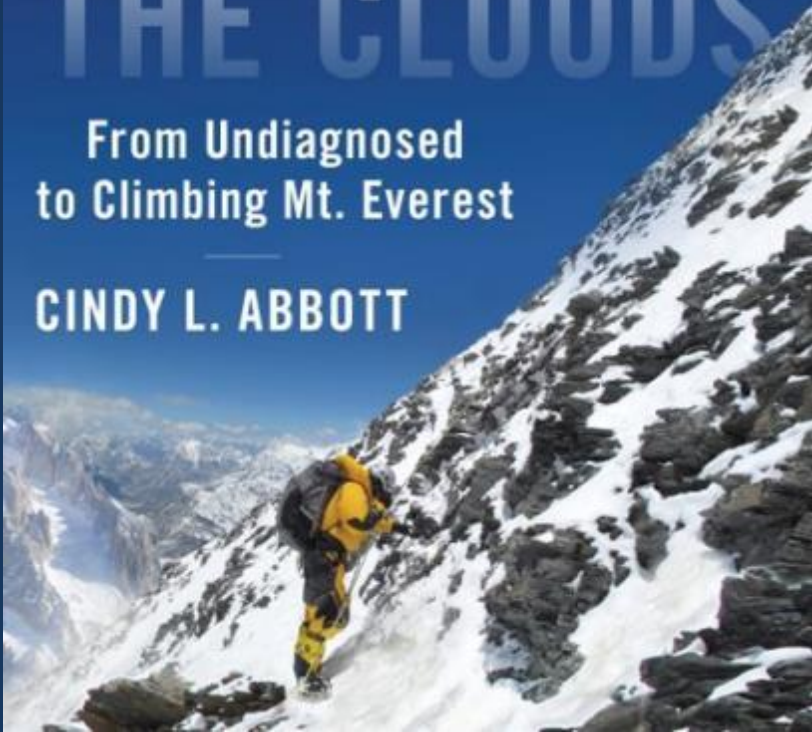


LIFE ISN'T ABOUT WAITING FOR THE STORM TO PASS.
IT'S ABOUT LEARNING TO DANCE IN THE RAIN!

REACHING BEYOND THE CLOUDS

From Undiagnosed
to Climbing Mt. Everest

CINDY L. ABBOTT



As part of her efforts to raise awareness of rare diseases, Cindy wrote and published a book entitled, *Reaching Beyond the Clouds*.

The book described her long journey to find a diagnosis. Then, in detail, it described her amazing journey to the summit of Mt. Everest.



After Everest, everyone was asking Cindy, “What’s next?”

Cindy wanted to do something extraordinary to bring rare disease out of the darkness and into the light.

So once again, Cindy reached for the unreachable – to complete the 1,049-mile Iditarod Sled Dog Race across Alaska.



Cindy's first attempt at the Iditarod ended in a **broken pelvis**. The second attempt was scratched due to extremely **poor weather**. The third attempt, finally, was the charm.

On March 22, 2015, after 13 days, 11 hours, 19 minutes, and 51 seconds, Cindy and her dog team crossed under the burlled arch in Nome and **completed the Iditarod**.



Requiring three attempts to complete the Iditarod is not unusual; it is extremely **demanding** on the musher and the dogs.



It was also fitting in that Cindy received the “**Red Lantern Award**” – signifying she was the **final musher** to complete the race. It perfectly symbolized her **incredible strength and perseverance**. She never gave up.



Banner on the Moon follows Cindy Abbott, who struggles to discover the cause of her many alarming and debilitating symptoms. At 48-years old, after 14 years of doctors and tests, she's finally diagnosed with a rare and life-threatening illness. She sets out on a very unique journey not only to raise awareness, but also to challenge herself to overcome one difficult feat after another... extreme endeavors that lead to prolonged absences from her husband, and put the once inseparable couple's relationship to the ultimate test.

Banner on the Moon

79 Minutes

Film introduction and narration by Golden Globe and four-time Emmy winning actress VALÉRIE HARPER.



Executive Producers:

TONY CACCIOTTI IN ASSOCIATION WITH AV PRODUCTIONS AND SILFRA CREATIONS

Directed/Written by RENEE SOTILE

Produced by RENEE SOTILE & MARY JO GODGES

www.reachingbeyondthecLOUDS.com

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BANNER ON THE MOON

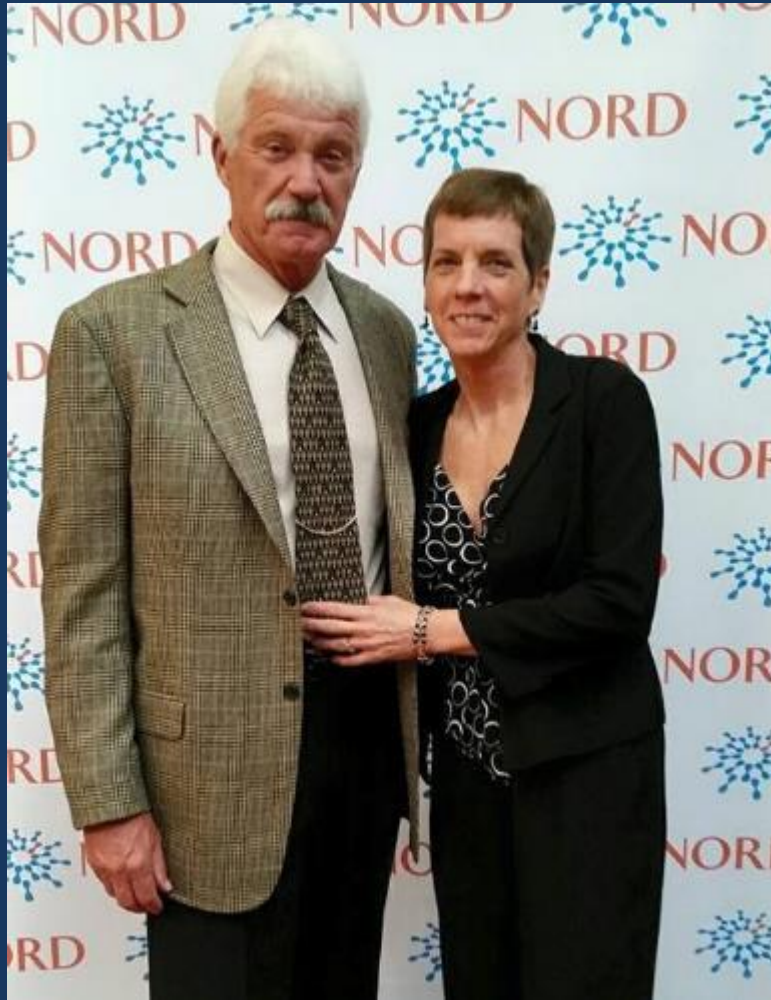


BANNER ON THE MOON

"A story of love, pain, and hope!"

In an attempt to bring rare disease awareness to new heights, Cindy and Larry produced a documentary of her story entitled, *Banner on the Moon*.

*"By sharing my journey, I hope to show that what might be thought of as impossible **may be possible**, if taken 10-feet-at-a-time."* Cindy Abbott



Cindy with Larry in Washington, D.C., to receive her NORD national award.

Cindy **carried two things** when she summited Mt. Everest and when she finished the Iditarod – a **CSUF** flag and the banner of the National Organization of Rare Disorders (**NORD**).

For **all her work** on behalf of NORD, Cindy was honored in May 2015 to receive the NORD **Rare Disease Public Awareness Award** in Washington, D.C.



Upon her **retirement** in 2016, Cindy and Larry moved permanently to **Willow, Alaska**, where they have a view of **Mt. Denali** from their windows.

After the 2019 race, Cindy retired from running the Iditarod. She continues to work at Vern Halter's, *Dream a Dream Dog Farm*. For now, she is content to **love and hug her amazing dogs** (and husband).



Cindy Abbott, M.S.

**Lecturer in Health Science, Emerita
CSUF 1996 - 2016**



