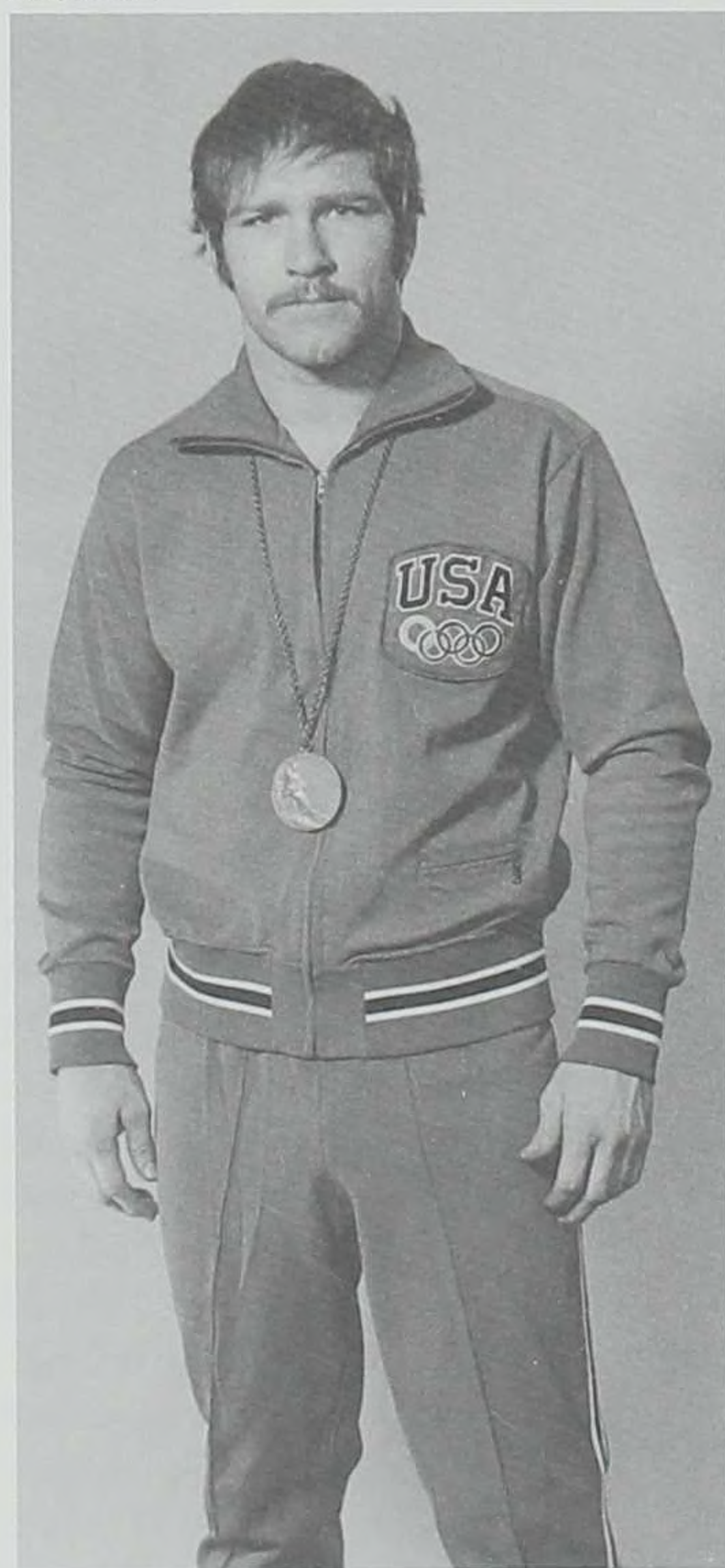


Gotch had been chief advisor to his fellow Iowan before the match and was proud of Craddock's achievements, declaring he had never seen a better wrestler in all his days of competition.

Just as professional wrestling, in the absence of clearly defined championship bouts, began to move further into the realm of theater than sport, amateur wrestling was gaining a foothold at colleges and universities. Chapman sees the particularly strong tradition of collegiate wrestling that has developed in Iowa as being directly attributable to Gotch's legacy. In sum-

ming up why Gotch deserves to be remembered for his contribution to the sport of wrestling, he explained, "For decades, his reputation hung over the land. . . . A generation of farm kids grew up wanting to be 'the heavyweight champion of the world' just like Frank and went to college and wrestled, then spread out . . . and began coaching wrestling." This tradition to which Gotch and Burns gave a strong impetus in Iowa has produced, among many other outstanding coaches and athletes, the man considered to be the greatest amateur wrestler of all time, Dan Gable. ♦

SHSI (IOWA CITY)



Dan Gable poses with his 1972 Olympic gold medal, won at Munich.

# Dan Gable

## World's Greatest Wrestler

Dan Gable sealed his reputation as the world's greatest wrestler by winning the gold at the 1972 Olympics at Munich, where he won six straight matches without giving up a single point. His Olympic triumph was the capstone of a remarkable career that included gold medals at both the Pan American Games and the world championships the previous year; three conference titles and two consecutive national collegiate titles; three national freestyle championships; and 100 college matches in a row without a single defeat.

Gable had come to Iowa State University an undefeated, two-time state winner for West Waterloo High School. He never lost a wrestling match until the last of his college career, a heartbreaking loss at the 1970 NCAA finals that nonetheless

strengthened his determination going into the international competitions. Gable became legendary not just for his record but for his drive and discipline, exemplified in his Olympic workout schedule that included up to eight hours of training a day.

University of Iowa head wrestling coach Gary Kordelmeier hired Gable as assistant coach in 1972. Together, they began actively recruiting for and promoting the Iowa program. By 1980, Iowa had "established a reputation as the most exciting, successful wrestling program in the United States," according to wrestling historian Mike Chapman. The tradition of excellence continued throughout Gable's 21 years as head coach, during which he coached his teams to 15 NCAA team championships before retiring in 1997. ♦

### NOTE ON SOURCES

These two articles on Frank Gotch and Dan Gable are excerpts from the chapter on wrestling in "Survey of Buildings, Sites, Structures, Objects, and Districts Related to the Development of Team Sports in Iowa, 1850-1960." This statewide survey (2003) was conducted by Clare L. Kernek and Leah D. Rogers, Tallgrass Historians L.C. (with contributions by Lisa Randolph, Prairiesong Research) for Iowa's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The work was funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the State Historical Society of Iowa, SHPO, through the Department of the Interior, National Park Service.

The survey's chapter on wrestling is based primarily on wrestling historian Mike Chapman's comprehensive history, *From Gotch to Gable: A History of Wrestling in Iowa*. Chapman is editor of the *Encyclopedia of American Wrestling*; executive director of the Dan Gable International Wrestling Museum and Institute in Waterloo; and author of the new biography *The Life and Legacy of Frank Gotch* (2008).