

DEFINING PRINCIPALS

BY ALEXIS KERSCHNER

Norman Johnson Photography

Two leaders of a premier New Mexico gym say their business is all about health, fitness, and changing lives.

New Mexico's gym and fitness powerhouse, Defined Fitness, begins each month with no customers. But by the end of each month, and every month, it has thousands, at five locations throughout the state.

FEELING GOOD! THEY SHOULD!

Traci Wolf, left, and Andee Wright Brown are president and CEO, respectively, of Defined Fitness, a thriving New Mexico gym and fitness business.

Two of Defined's leaders, Andee Wright Brown, '92 BAA, and Traci Wolf, '84 BA, '88 JD, spend their days helping people transform their lives and, along the way, helping build Defined into a community-minded fitness empire.

Andee, the CEO, is a striking brunette with an athletic build, hearkening back to her days as a gymnast at UNM. Traci, the president, is blonde and slim, with intense eyes and delivery. They've been working together for a long time, often finishing

each other's sentences or looking to each other for clarification.

Their eyes shine with pride as they describe a gym that builds its business every month on customer loyalty, health and wellness, and the belief that a gym should keep its membership by providing the best product at the best price, not by year-long contracts. A one-time fee for joining lasts a lifetime, even if the member leaves for years. The membership fee has been raised only three times in 30 years.

"People in the industry think we're crazy," says Andee. "And they always ask us why it works. It's because we're not just about selling membership. We're about health, fitness, and changing lives." Customers will pay for those, even in a down economy. "People will give up a Starbucks for what we offer," Andee says.

DEFINING MOMENTS

Andee and Traci met more than 20 years ago, when Defined was just beginning.

Traci had been hired as legal counsel for Defined and was working with owners Bo and Trish Fowler who had acquired the gym as part of a legal settlement. Today Traci's law firm, Wolf and Fox, works on contracts, development, and acquisition for Defined.

"It's pretty amazing that this formerly small business now keeps two-and-a-half attorneys busy full time," she says.

Andee's history with Defined began while teaching in an after-school gymnastics program for kids. One of the children in the class was the Fowlers' daughter.

One day after the children's class, Andee went out into the rain to sell candy bars for the program. Trish bought her whole box of 20.

"Trish said I was crying out in the pouring rain - I don't quite remember that," says Andee, chuckling.

A week later, the UNM weight room closed for the summer and Andee needed a place to work out to stay in shape for the upcoming gymnastics season. She asked Trish for a job at Defined, where she could work out for free. Trish handed her a key

and told her to open the gym at 4:30 the next morning.

COMMUNITY MUSCLE

Many years later, Defined is succeeding in a notoriously tough industry.

Among Defined's precepts is meeting customer expectations for new equipment and the latest offerings.

While there is a typical schedule for replacing equipment, Andee and Traci exceed it. The old equipment is often donated to various entities, including UNM.

When the cardio equipment at the Defined location in Albuquerque's far north heights was replaced early in its life cycle, Defined contacted the new strength and conditioning coach for the UNM football team; all the slightly used equipment is now going to the UNM athletics complex.

Next up for Traci and Andee is the launch and expansion of "Community Muscle," the non-profit arm of Defined that is responsible for philanthropic endeavors, including support for UNM, the Lobos, the Lobo Club, and much more.

DEFINING SATISFACTION

At the end of the day, Defined is about fitness and life changes.

"What I love is that you really change and affect people's lives," says Andee. "I can't tell you how many times a member says, 'I've lost 30 pounds and I feel great.' You're a place and an environment to induce positive change in people's lives. That feels good."

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Holly Shumas, '96 BA, is a licensed marriage and family therapist in California. Her second novel, *Love and Other Natural Disasters* (2009), was recommended by *Working Mother* and *Parenting* magazines. Her website is <http://www.hollyshumas.com>.

Onesimo C. Vigil, '96 ASDH, '97 BSDH, Albuquerque, is CEO for Intelli-Care, and owns an investment company, MJRC Holdings. He has written *Chicano Millionaires*, published this spring by Authorhouse.

Wryan Capps, '97 BBA, of Moss Adams in Albuquerque, has received the Institute of Certified Construction Industry Financial Professionals designation.

Margret Carde, '97 JD, Santa Fe, a professional artist for 40 years, had an exhibit of her work, called "Sky Paintings," at the Coody Contemporary Gallery last winter.

Mike Prinzo, '97 BBA, '99 MBA, Albuquerque, recently joined Meyners + Company as manager of the business and tax services department.

Jason C. Bousliman, '98 BA, '01 JD, Albuquerque, has been promoted to shareholder in the Modrall Sperling law firm.

Julia Chacon, '98 BAFA, '98 BS, Santa Fe, has a new flamenco company, Inspiración Flamenca, which was featured on the Travel Channel. She was featured on Santa Fe Public Radio's *Gotta Dance*.

Patrick Conlon, '98 MS, Downers Grove, Illinois, has been elected a Fellow of the National Academies of Practice: Distinguished Practitioner of the Nursing Academy. The NAP advises public policymakers on healthcare issues from the perspective of expert practitioners and scholars.

Jessica M. Hernandez, '99 BA, '02 JD, Albuquerque, has been elected to the Rodey Law Firm's board of directors. She practices in the areas of product liability, employment, and general civil litigation.

Sara R. Traub, '99 BS, '02 MA, '08 JD, Albuquerque, has joined the law firm of Pregenzer, Baysinger, Wideman & Sale as an associate. She practices in the areas of estate planning, taxation, estate administration, and elder law.

Joshua K. Conaway, '00 BA, Albuquerque, has been promoted to shareholder at the law firm of Hatch, Allen & Shepherd.

Christopher J. DeLara, '00 JD, '00 MPA, Albuquerque, is a partner and shareholder of Guebert Bruckner where he practices in the areas of insurance bad faith, professional liability, medical negligence, and complex litigation.