

12 From the Heart

Association Names Washington's Healthiest

By Cheryl Simon
Special to The Washington Post

February used to be just for valentines. Now it's also the month for hearts. As part of its celebration of "Heart Month," the American Heart Association has selected 12 of Washington's healthiest and heartiest citizens.

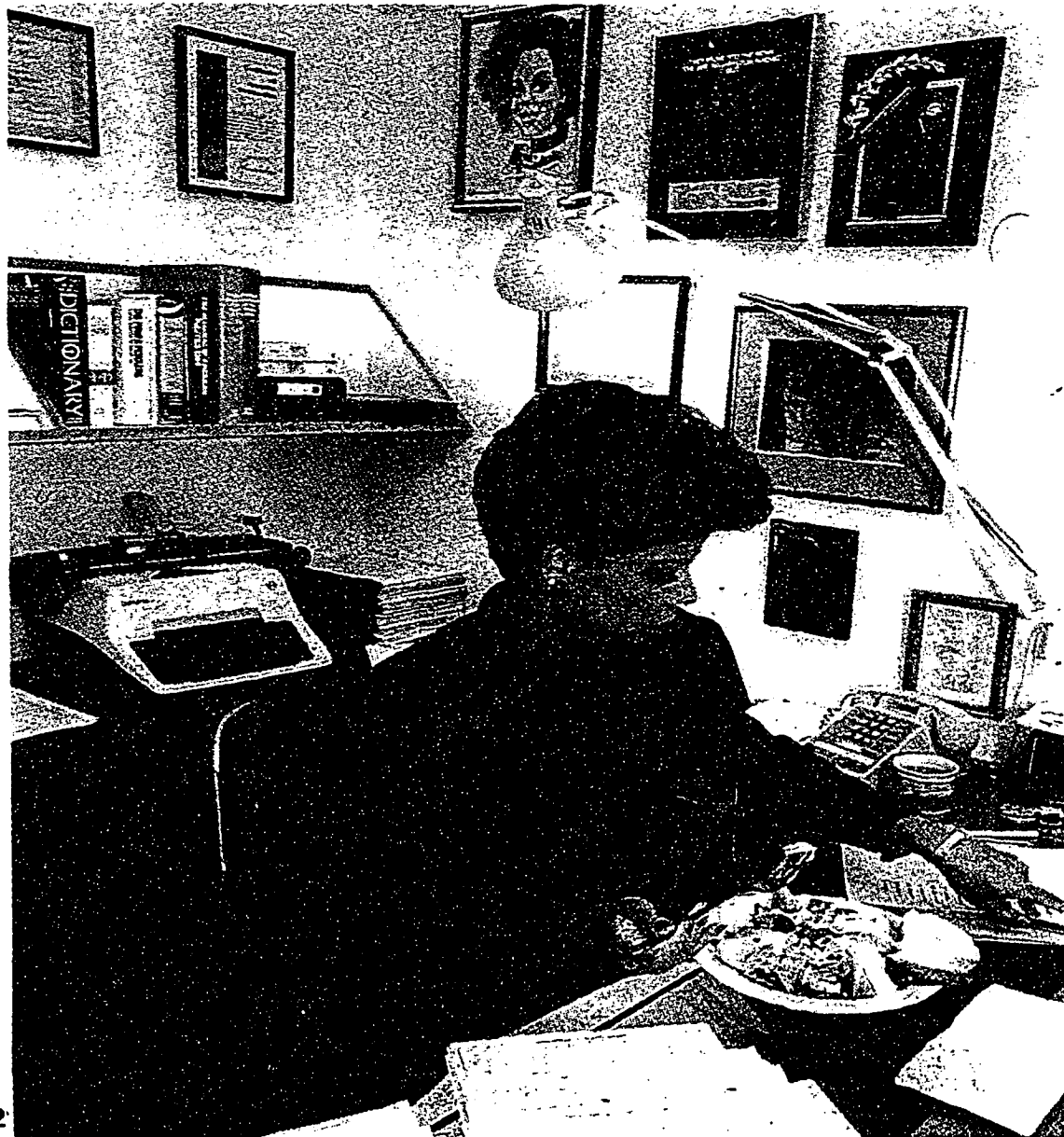
In their search for the 12 heartiest Washingtonians, seven volunteer judges reviewed more than 200 candidates, nominated by an admittedly informal process. The criteria were simple:

The candidates do not smoke, they exercise daily, they maintain proper weight, and they are careful about their diets.

What sets the 12 apart is the public aspect of their dedication to fitness. Dr. David L. Pearle, a cardiologist and president of the District chapter of the American Heart Association, says he hopes the list will become an annual event—a way to honor people for their good habits.

"We want to give other people ideas of what kinds of things might be done," says Pearle, himself a marathoner. "By their example, the 12 influence others to pursue a heart-healthy life style."

MAUREEN BUNYAN BY MOLLY ROBERTS
FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



LACEY O'NEAL BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST

Lacey O'Neal

Olympic Hurdler

■ When Lacey O'Neal was competing as a hurdler in the 1964 and 1972 Olympic games, superbly conditioned women were less common than they are today. "It used to be that femininity was associated with weakness, and that muscles on a woman were ugly," she says. "Not anymore. Now men are proud to say, 'My woman is strong.'"

For the past year, she has been trying to reinforce the changed attitudes about fitness by training employes from the D.C. Department of Recreation to run fitness classes for District employes.

While O'Neal, 40, no longer competes, she keeps in shape by taking aerobic dance classes, lifting weights and running. "I eat moderately, but I eat everything," she says. The combination of diet and exercise gives her results she likes: looking and feeling young.

Maureen Bunyan

Television Anchor

■ In a field as competitive as television news, the pressures to look good often rival the pressures to perform, especially for a woman. But it's the internal benefits of fitness, not just the external ones, that keep Maureen Bunyan on the move.

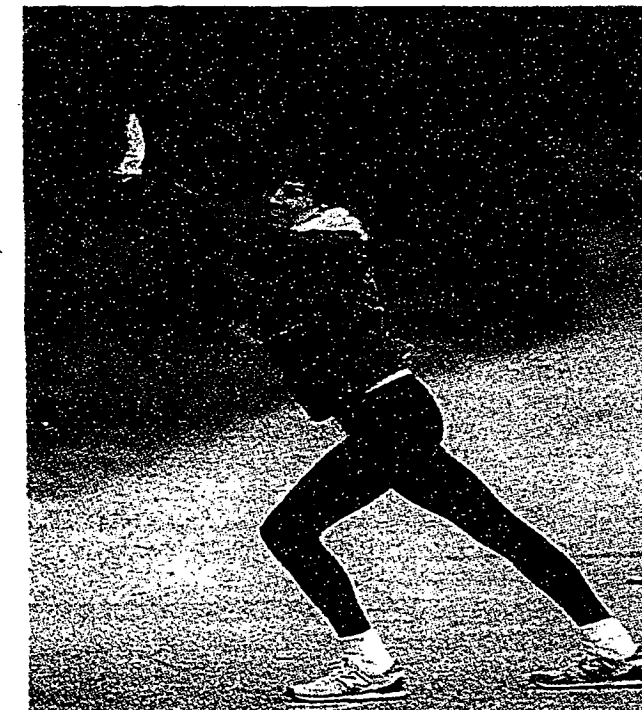
The head and shoulders of WDVM's news anchor are familiar to many metropolitan area viewers. But Bunyan's television image doesn't reveal her confident gait, erect posture and clear eyes.

Three times a week, Bunyan, 40, heads for her exercise class. On weekends, she speed-walks and hikes with friends.

The best thing, though, is that she feels better—younger and more energetic—than she did five years ago.

"A lot of young people ask me how to begin a career in broadcasting, but what they really want to know is how to get to a point in life where they'll get recognition," the Channel 9 reporter says. "I tell them that nothing happens instantly, and I try to show them the processes, such as writing a resume, that must take place.

"It's the same with fitness. Everything builds on the step before."



PAM BRISCOE BY BILL SNEAD—THE WASHINGTON POST

Pam Briscoe

Marathon Runner

■ As Pamela Briscoe ran the first miles of the Marine Corps Marathon last November, she didn't expect to win. Only as the race progressed, and she heard the spotters call out the times, did she realize that victory was within reach. She abandoned her prudent goals for the day and gave the race everything she had.

When the race was over, "I was dead," Briscoe recalls.

But triumph is addictive, and as she trains now for the Boston Marathon in April, her goal is to finish in less than 240 minutes—beating the 243.20-minute race that won her first place here.

Briscoe, 29, started running marathons in 1979 after a challenge from her friends. After the 1981 Marine Corps Marathon, she asked Jim Hagan, a friend from the Washington Running Club, to coach her.

"Having Jim as a coach is a big part of why I'm still racing," she says. "It really helps to have someone else out there."