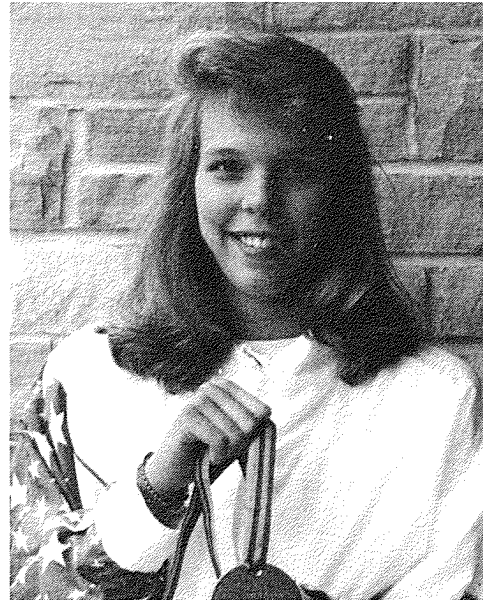


In her attempt for an Olympic medal, Laney faces an opponent in a round of taekwondo. *Photo courtesy of D.W. Kang.*

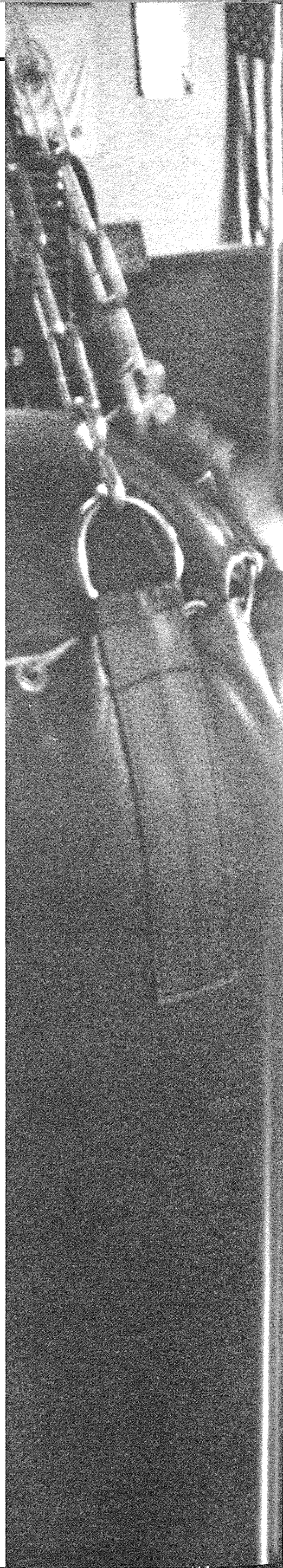


Accepting their awards, Laney and the welterweight medal winners celebrate victory. *Photo courtesy of D.W. Kang.*

Pleased with winning, Laney shows off her bronze medal won at the Summer Olympics. *Photo courtesy of D.W. Kang.*



With intense determination, Laney works out. *Photo courtesy of Michael Wyke, Tulsa Tribune.*





OLYMPIC BRONZE

by Chad Bonham

For TU junior Danielle Laney, it was an Olympic dream that almost went nightmarishly wrong. Instead, she holds a bronze medal in the demonstration sport of taekwondo as a testament to her resilient spirit.

After winning a spot on the U.S. National team, Arlene Limas of Chicago sued the taekwondo arbitration board for the right to fight Laney in a winner-take-all bout. The 20-year-old finance student nearly gave up on the spot. "I almost didn't want to fight," Laney said. "I felt like my rights had been stripped."

By defeating Limas for a third time, Laney finally found justice and a plane ticket to Barcelona, Spain. But the U.S. Olympic Committee's public relations department still listed Limas instead of Laney in the U.S. Olympic Team Media Guide.

With the emotional rollercoaster ride completed, Laney hit a highpoint while taking part in the Opening Ceremony's march of nations.

Later, the patriotic and team aspects of participa-

tion overwhelmed her. "In taekwondo, you're mostly competing for yourself," she said, "but this was like being in the Army and fighting for your country. It's hard to describe the feeling."

On the mat, Laney faced an unknown Malaysian opponent and a low-scoring panel of judges. After the first round, she went on the offensive and came away with a 1-0 victory. Facing a Spanish favorite in the semi-final match was yet another challenge.

"The crowd was real loud," she said. "In Spain, they don't yell the person's name, but the country instead. So I just pretended they were yelling for me."

After the match, Laney was disappointed to see the American flag raised a bit lower than the gold and silver medalists' banners. "I was just thinking how I was wanting to hear my anthem instead," she said. "But you can't dwell on it."

As to participating in the Olympics in 1996, she says, "It's a possibility, but I need to finish school and get a career going. I'll just have to see where I am when the time comes."