

# Fitness trainer goes to acting after football

By Sharon Corcoran

*The Goodland Star-News*  
Hard work, quick decisions and being in the right place at the right time have combined to help Goodland High School graduate Tinker Keck to live something of a dream life.

He achieved his dream of playing pro football and went on to establish himself as a fitness trainer and to sideline as a model and actor. He lives where he has “vacation weather” all year, and he has had brushes with fame. Nonetheless, Keck has kept his life in perspective and sees the importance of making the most of each day.

Keck, a fitness trainer in Los Angeles, appeared on ABC’s General Hospital Dec. 23 and will be filming another part for the show in January. He has appeared in sports highlights on ESPN, in commercials, in a print ad and in a couple of independent films. And he trained actress Charlene Tilton for a celebrity body challenge that will appear on the Discovery Channel. Keck said he doesn’t know yet when it will air.

It was a competition between Tilton and four other celebrities. Keck said he shot four episodes in the 12 weeks of the competition. He said he recognized some of the celebrities in the show but not others. One was actor Erik Estrada, most famous for his role on the NBC show CHiP’s that aired in the ’70s and ’80s.

Keck said he goes on modeling calls and commercials when he has time but doesn’t count on it as a career.

“I use it as kind of a lottery...,” he said. “It’s not regular; it’s luck of the draw.”

There are a lot of people out there who want to act and model, he added, and many times, he has been down to the end but didn’t get the role.

But he has taken the opportunities he has had, even when they require something a little unusual. Keck said he was in a print ad for Fuji film that required those in the ad to paint their whole bodies. It took all day, he said. The ad was shot in Los Angeles but was made to look like it was done by a rock formation in France.

Keck said he appreciates the opportunities he has had but knows it has taken effort on his part to get where he is.

“I’ve been blessed about having the opportunities to do a lot of things,” Keck said. “I have also put myself in a place to be able to. You have to work at it; you have to take advantage of opportunities.”

It started with playing football, he



Tinker Keck (left) exchanged some small talk with Goodland Activities Center director Sandy Trachsel as Catia Frazao (center)

signs the guest roster at the center’s open house Dec. 27 celebrating the building’s 20th anniversary.

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

said, the decision to play or not, to play for Garden City or Hutchinson, and one thing led to the next and the next. After two years at Hutchinson Community College, Keck went to the University of Cincinnati.

In his junior year, Keck set an NCAA record with four punt returns for touchdowns in the season and two in one game. After that successful season, Keck said he had another choice—to go professional in the National Football League or to stay in college.

He chose to complete his education. The first game of his senior year, Keck suffered a knee injury that ultimately would end his football career.

Keck said sometimes he thinks about what might have happened if he had gone to the NFL before the injury, but he doesn’t dwell on it.

“When you make a decision,” he said, “you just have to go with it and make the most of it.”

On the play where he was injured,

Keck said had to make another decision — after catching the ball in the end zone, he had to decide whether to run it out or not.

“It was like the Red Sea parted,” Keck said. “I saw a clear path to the end zone.”

So he chose to run it out. But a defender came out of nowhere and clotheslined him. Keck did go on to play in the NFL, for the New York Giants. After being released, he tried out for the XFL, where he played for the world champion Los Angeles Xtreme, an opportunity he made for himself.

Keck said he bought his own plane ticket to try out. He said he would have liked to play longer than he did, but the knee got worse. Arthritis set in, Keck said, and a doctor recommended quitting.

“He said if I want to be able to walk when I’m 40, I needed to quit,” Keck said.

He said he was in a lot of pain and spent a lot of time in the ice tub for

the swelling. He said he could probably have extended his career another two years but after considering his options, decided it was time to quit.

“I didn’t want to always be on medication,” he said. “Even though I had a passion to play football, I felt it was a good opportunity to leave.”

Keck said he had reached his goal to play in the pros, something he had wanted to do since he was a child, and had won a championship with the Xtreme.

“It was a dream come true to be able to achieve that,” he said.

When Keck quit football, he decided he wanted to stay in Los Angeles. The weather was great, he said, like vacation every day. He said he started in fitness because he was looking for a way to better his athletic condition.

“I enjoyed learning about the body,” he said, “but mostly I did it to better myself in sports.”

Keck studied exercise physiol-

ogy and kinesiology at Cincinnati. He said he knew there would be a demand for that knowledge.

His knowledge of fitness has led to a career as a personal trainer, a good career for someone wanting to stay in Los Angeles, and it has led to other opportunities.

Keck said his clients include real estate agents, lawyers, producers and actors. He said he ended up on General Hospital because a client recommended him to one of his clients.

Keck said he sent his résumé and head shot and got the part as a police officer handing out toys. They liked him so much, he has another part on the show that will be filmed Jan. 9.

Another opportunity for Keck is to open his own gym. He said one of his clients is helping him with the project, and he hopes to open an exclusive gym by the Malibu pier in March.

Keck said he always strives to be

better and that there are still a lot of things he wants to accomplish.

“I want to experience life to the fullest and enjoy it,” he said. “I’ve always believed that balance is the key to life. I want to live in a balanced setting and try to better myself.”

Keck said he doesn’t want to be afraid to experience new things.

“Sometimes we get too comfortable with who we are and where we are,” he said. “To me, that’s not life.”

Keck said he wants to be retired at 35 and wants to travel throughout the world.

“I think this country is fortunate to have opportunities others don’t,” he said, “and we take it for granted. It would be good to see the difference and learn from that.”

Keck said he wants to have a family that’s loving and caring and does things together and to provide for them, and would also like to help others.

He is working on starting his training business and on real estate ventures and would like to develop a non-profit organization to help children and those less fortunate.

Keck enjoys spending time with his family and is willing to leave the fine southern California weather twice a year for reunions.

“I enjoy that,” he said. “You never know how long they’ll be around or what life will present you.”

He spent a week and a half in the area at Christmas, staying with his mother, Jane Keck, in Brewster.

Other family members Keck spent time with include his father, Phil Keck, and younger brother and sister, Trek and Keana of Colby, his older sister Angie of Rexford, his brother Trent in Wichita, sister Trixie of Kansas City and his grandparents, Don and Dorothy Crumbaker and Bill and Eva Keck, all of Colby.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

Internet tonight!  
899-2338

## student of the week



**Name:** Claudia Lopez  
**Parents:** Martin and Rosa Lopez

**Grade:** Junior  
**Age:** 18

**We’ve nominated this student because:** Claudia is a delightful student who is conscientious of her classroom work. She is also very kind and helpful to others and has a true interest in history. We have really enjoyed the opportunity to have her in our classes.

**Student Comment:** My favorite aspect of school is that teachers are always there to help students to accomplish their goals in their classes. World History is my favorite subject.

After graduating from Goodland High School I will remember all the great moments I share with my friends and teachers. I will also remember Mr. Swager for all the help we Hispanics in school received in creating G.R.A.C.E.

**Activities involved in at school:** G.R.A.C.E. (Girls Rights and Accountability to their Culture and Education), American Field Service.

**My choice of movies, books, and games:** Selena is my favorite movie. I listen to a lot of Mexican music. My favorite book is “Night” by Eli Weisel.

**After I leave Goodland High School I intend to:** attend Seward Community College in Liberal.

**And 10 years from now, I think I’ll be:** working as a professional in social work. Working for an immigration office, also with a family with the love of my life.

**Favorite Quote:** “Throw your dreams into space like a kite, and you do not know what it will bring back, a new life, a new friend, a new love, a new country.” by Anais Nin

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