

## Gabby Douglas' Parents Sacrificed to Support Olympic Superstar

Written by Forward Times Staff  
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Gabrielle Douglas told reporters via The Associated Press, “Someone mentioned that I was the first black American (to win the all-around gold), and I said, ‘Oh yeah, I forgot about that!’ I feel so honored.”

Fresh off her gold medal win in the Artistic Gymnastics Women’s Individual All-Around final on Day 6 of the London 2012 Olympic Games at North Greenwich Arena in London, England, Douglas, 16, nicknamed The “Flying Squirrel” has become the darling of the Olympics.

Gabby, who was raised in Virginia, started training at the tender age of 6. Her dad, Air Force Staff Sgt. Timothy Douglas, went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan when she was just 9 years old.

“I just had to pray to God ...and tell the angels to keep my dad safe...,” she recently explained to NBC Nightly News.

After having to miss many of her competitions, Gabby’s father was able to attend her U.S. Olympic trials on June 29.

“I’m like, ‘Who’s calling my name?’ And then I look up. It was my dad and his friend, and I haven’t seen him in a while,” Gabby explained. “They were holding up the flag, and I almost felt like bawling.”

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According to USA Today, it was the first time he had seen her since October 2010, and in the stands he was holding an American flag with "Go Gabby Douglas, Love, Dad," on the front.

"I just missed her so much," Timothy Douglas said at the trials. "It's just so thrilling what's going on."

Gabby's parents have separated and are in the process of a divorce. Both supported their daughter's Olympic dreams and made sacrifices to pay for her expensive training and travel. While Timothy didn't appear to have been able to attend the London Games to see his daughter win the gold, her mother Natalie Hawkins was there every step of the way.

"I'm so happy for her, so thrilled," Natalie said. "I love her and I'm so proud of her."

Thanks, in part, to her mother, Gabby went into the Games knowing it would be a good day. She texted her mom, "It's raining outside, mom. Do you know what that means?" Natalie had always told her that rain was a sign of God's will and it meant it was going to be a great day.

"I hope that I inspire people. I want to inspire people," Gabby said of her win. "My mother said you can inspire a nation."