

Vonetta Flowers
Olympic Gold Medalist
African-American Pioneer
at a glance...

Hometown: Birmingham, AL

Resides: Jacksonville, FL

Birth date: October 29, 1973

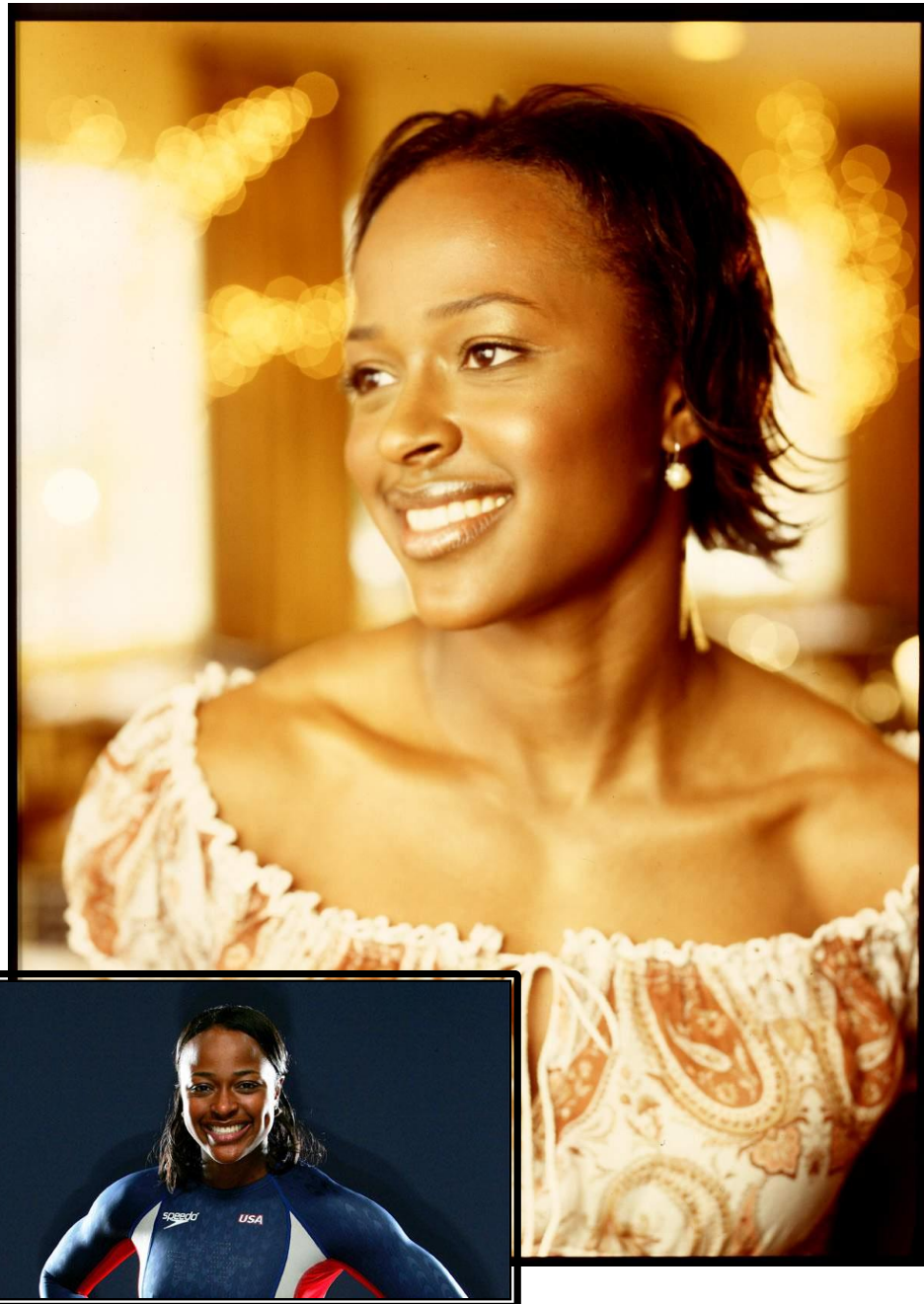
Height: 5' 7"

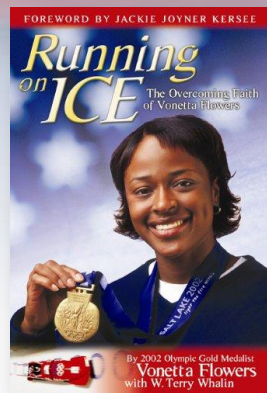
College: Univ. of Alabama Birmingham

2002 Olympic Gold Medalist
Two-time U.S. Olympian (2002 & 2006)

Points of Interest...

- Vonetta is the first person of African descent, from any country, to win a winter Olympic gold medal.
- Vonetta is a married mother of three young boys; twins Jorden & Jaden, and younger brother Jaxon.
- Vonetta has been named one of People Magazine's 50 Most Beautiful People, Essence Magazine's 50 Most Inspiring African-Americans and Ebony Magazine's 50 Most Intriguing Blacks.
- In May of 2011, Vonetta was inducted in the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame.
- Vonetta was a 7-time All American track & field athlete at UAB.
- Co-author of *Running On Ice: The Overcoming Faith Of Vonetta Flowers*





Born and raised in Birmingham, AL, Vonetta Flowers had rarely seen snow and ice, let alone ever imagined her path to greatness would literally be covered by both. First discovered as a remarkably fast fourth grader, Vonetta was recruited into a local track team where she honed a God-given gift to run and jump. Eventually, her talent and tenacious work ethic led to a track scholarship to the University of Alabama Birmingham. She was the first member of her family to pursue higher education. At UAB she became a 7-time All American and dreamed of representing the USA at the Olympic Games. Unfortunately, injuries plagued Vonetta's Olympic pursuits and after failed attempts to make the 1996 & 2000 Olympic teams it appeared her dream had been put to rest.

Vonetta married her college sweetheart Johnny, a champion athlete himself, and it was he who eventually led her down a frosty path back to her dream. Two days after the 2000 Olympic Trials Johnny came upon a USA Bobsled Team recruiting flyer, seeking talented track and field athletes to try sliding. Intrigued, Johnny responded, and dragged Vonetta along with him. Bobsled coaches couldn't miss Vonetta's athletic ability and in short order she found herself in some of Europe's classic cold weather locales, pushing a 450 lb. sled with all she had toward an unlikely, rekindled Olympic dream.

By the end of her rookie season, Vonetta and her then teammate, Bonny Warner, were ranked 2nd in the US and 3rd in the world. Then, unexpectedly, and with the Olympics in sight, Warner elected to go with a different pusher and Vonetta's Olympic dream was once again in doubt. She connected with driver Jill Bakken and the two immediately clicked. With only one race under their belts as team prior to the 2002 Olympics they arrived in Salt Lake City under the radar...longshots at best. They rose to the occasion on the world's biggest sporting stage and shocked the bobsled world, winning the first US Olympic bobsled medal in 46 years. With the victory Vonetta left indelible footprints on the podium and in the snow as the first black athlete to ever claim winter Olympic gold.

Now the mother of three young boys, Vonetta has returned to bobsled training and competition in pursuit of her third Olympic team and the 2014 Olympic Games.



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