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Former Flames Gymnast Atlin Mitchell Tumbles Her Way To Cirque du Soleil

Graduated UIC standout now traveling with one of world's most entertaining extravaganzas.

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Sometimes, fate works in mysterious ways.

In Atlin Mitchell's case, fate helped her land what many would consider the job of a lifetime.

Mitchell, a former standout on the UIC women's gymnastics team, is now making a living as a performer for the world-renowned Cirque du Soleil, but the opportunity was very much an instance of coincidence.

The South Surrey, British Columbia native was working in a restaurant back home after graduating from UIC in 2003, enjoying her life after college while waiting for the right opportunity to establish a career. The moment came when a friend who had trained with Mitchell moved in with Atlin's mom.

Later on, Mitchell's friend found out from a former coach's good friend who worked for Cirque du Soleil that the touring company was looking for athletes to join the show. So when Mitchell, an extraordinary athlete who once shared the school's vault record, was informed of the opportunity, she sent in a video tape to see if she fit the bill.

A month and a half after sending in her tape, Mitchell was auditioning for a spot, and three days later she was asked to attend a summer training camp in Cirque du Soleil's home base of Montreal for the Alegria show.

In the end, Mitchell's talents took her to the acrobatic Saltimbanco show, where she performs in the Bungee, Russian Swing and Chinese Poles acts.

In each act Mitchell performs anywhere from 25-30 feet in the air, flying across the stage and performing aerial dances in Baroque costume with a grace and style unlike any other exhibition in the world.

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Former UIC gymnast Atlin Mitchell (shown here at the 2003 NCAA South Central Regional) took her skills from the floor exercise mat to the