

Editor's Note

Seasons



Every year at the USMS annual meeting, during a House of Delegates session, the names of members who passed away during the year are read and a moment of silence is observed in their honor. Some of the names are those of well-known members; some are unfamiliar. Regardless, the reaction on the floor is the same: respectful silence and reflection.

This year the names of two of Masters Swimming's founding members, both Ransom J. Arthur Award recipients who passed away peacefully in the embrace of loved ones—within a few weeks of each other this summer—will be on that list: June Krauser, 88, and Paul Hutinger, 89.

It would be impossible to capture here the impact June, known worldwide as "The Mother of Masters Swimming," has had on USMS. We wouldn't be where we are today if it weren't for her. Unlike many of our longtime members, I never had the opportunity to know her. Based on their remembrances, I know that I would have liked her very much: She demanded excellence in all things and spoke her mind, unencumbered by the burden of an overactive filter.

Paul Hutinger, who served on the Sports Medicine and Science, Recognition and Awards, and History and Archives Committees, and his wife Margie, have been familiar faces on pool decks around the country for many years. When USMS established its first national headquarters, the Hutingers stopped by with memorabilia from the early days of Masters Swimming, including a poster advertising the first long-course nationals in 1972, and it hangs in our office today.

Two other names that will be included on that list this year are swimmers who were taken abruptly during open water swims, of apparent heart attacks, within a few weeks of each other this summer: Bob Matysek and Chris Clarke.

Bob and his brothers, including Jim Matysek, USMS IT director and creator of our website, usms.org, have an annual family tradition of doing the Chesapeake Bay Swim together, and this was Bob's 20th year. Something went wrong about a mile and a half into the 4.4-mile swim, and Bob was pulled into a rescue boat. Jim, who was in the wave right after Bob, swam past that boat—not knowing his brother was on board.

A few days later, my close friend Chris Clarke, an avid open water swimmer and fierce competitor, and I were texting about Bob's death and Chris wrote, "You never know when your time is up; live life every day!" A little more than a week later he too was gone, pulled less than a mile from the finish of a 2.4-mile race in a peaceful little lake in Indiana.

Loss is part of life, and as cliché as it sounds, I do cling to the belief that Bob and Chris died doing what they loved. They don't appear to have suffered—the pain resides in the hearts of those they left behind.

Another way to honor those who precede us to that ultimate warm-down pool is to share their stories. We'll be working with the History and Archives Committee to bring June's and Paul's stories back to the pages of *SWIMMER* and usms.org.

We'll also be working with the Sports Medicine and Science Committee and other medical experts to continue publishing articles on health issues that affect our members. Those all-important conversations between adult athletes and their physicians must continue. In addition, case studies on sudden-death incidents assist medical staff, event directors, and our Open Water and Championship Committees in planning.

And no matter what, we're not going to stop swimming. One September day in the future, our names will be called on the HOD floor and, just as June's, Paul's, Bob's, and Chris's will, we'll want them to echo with the resonance of a life well swum.

In the meantime, get to know your lanemates. Share an anecdote with a younger swimmer. Ask an old-timer about "that time back when...." Talk to your doctor. Honor the contributions of those who came before by contributing your own verse to the ongoing, powerful song of Masters Swimming and of life.

Laura Hamel, Editor-in-Chief

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ON THE COVER

Marathon swimmer Bethany Bosch, 30, and her trusty canine sidekick Guri, 4, train together in Vermont and completed the 5-mile Lake Willoughby race together last year ("Dogging It," page 8). Photo by Jenny Kokocki

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» Name and breed of a cherished four-legged companion, regardless of swimming ability.

Snoopy; beagle

Raptor; German shepherd

Hemingway; longhaired polydactyl cat

Phoebe; golden retriever

Pennie Lane; fat, spoiled calico cat

Gumbo; chocolate lab

Rawley; mackerel tabby

Tommy; Labrador retriever

Sienna; fat, longhaired cat