



Disability Swimming Coaching Awards

Deadline: September 5, 2017

The mission of the Disability Swimming Committee is the full inclusion of swimmers with a disability in USA Swimming programs

The purpose of the Disability Swimming Coaching Awards is to recognize significant contributions by coaches to the inclusion of swimmers with a disability in USA Swimming programs. The most prestigious coaching honor is the James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award. The award is named in honor and memory of Jimi Flowers, an incredible coach who developed numerous Olympic and Paralympic champions. Flowers passed away in a climbing accident in the summer of 2009.

Eligibility. Nominees may include an individual coach or a coaching staff from the same USA Swimming club. Nominees must be coach members of USA Swimming. Coaches may be nominated for and/or receive a Disability Swimming Coaching Award more than once.

Criteria: Criteria include: (a) excellence in coaching swimmers with a disability as demonstrated by the swimmers' improvement and performances; (b) significant efforts to attract and welcome persons with a disability to competitive swimming, and (c) significant efforts to foster inclusion within the club, LSC, other USA Swimming programs, or generally in the sport of swimming. The nominee's contributions to inclusion may include club, LSC, national, or international examples. The nomination should focus on contributions during the previous year, namely, August 1 through July 31.

Awards:

- **James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award.** One national-level award shall be presented annually at the annual USA Swimming Convention.
- **Disability Swimming Outstanding Coach Awards.** Up to five awards shall be presented annually. Winners of these awards will receive certificates suitable for framing, with certificates distributed via convention delegates from the coaches' LSCs or via mail service.

Nomination Process. Any USA Swimming member athlete, coach, volunteer, club, or LSC may submit a nomination by sending the official nomination form to Randy Julian, the staff liaison to the Disability Swimming Committee.

Randy Julian
USA Swimming
One Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

Email: rjulian@usaswimming.org
Fax: 719.866.4669
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Nomination Deadline. Received on or before September 5, 2017

Selection process. Recipients will be determined by vote of the members of the USA-S Disability Swimming Committee.

**Past Recipients of the James "Jimi" Raymond Flowers
Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award:**

2016 Tom Hazlett
2015 Queenie Nichols (CO)
2014 Kristi Moore (MI)
2013 Brian Loeffler (MD)
2012 Dave Denniston (CO)
2011 Jim Andersen (MN)
2010 Shawn Kornoelje (MI) and Fred Lamback (GA)
2009 James "Jimi" Raymond Flowers (CO)

Past Recipients of the Disability Swimming Outstanding Coach Award:

2011 Bill Thomas (ST), D. Kiko VanZandt (PN), Donald H. Watkinds (SI)
2010 John Almeida (IL), Megan Harden (AZ), Jack Jackson (MW), Steve Keller (WI)
2009 Jim Andersen (MN), Justin Berry (PN), Fred Lamback (GA), John Mattos (CO)

James "Jimi" Raymond Flowers

Namesake and First Recipient of the
James Raymond "Jimi" Flowers Coach of the Year Award



The USA Swimming Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award is named in honor of James "Jimi" Raymond Flowers. According to Executive Director Chuck Wielgus, "We hope that naming the award in Jimi's honor will help to inspire other coaches to follow his example of inclusion of swimmers with disabilities in the sport of swimming. The impact that Jimi had on our sport was felt by many and we know that his legacy will continue to live on for years to come."

Jimi's contributions to inclusion were significant. He coached several swimmers who represented the USA at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics Games and at other international competitions. When at swim meets, he motivated many young swimmers with disabilities to continue in the sport by complimenting them on their performances, speaking with them about their goals, and offering helpful advice. Jimi assisted recently injured athletes such as Dave Denniston and war veterans in the Wounded Warriors program to rediscover their love of sport and become involved in Paralympic swimming. In a USOC press release, Jimi was described as "an incredible coach who developed numerous Olympic and Paralympic champions. He was passionate about swimming, dedicated to helping others, and was such an inspiration to athletes, colleagues, and all who knew him."

Jimi had an extensive background in competitive swimming. He was an avid swimmer throughout his life, having competed at the University of Tulane all four years of college. He was a four-time conference champion in the 200m breast. Flowers competed in three NCAA Championships, and in his senior year, he was named Athlete of the Year for the entire University. Flowers also competed at two U.S. Olympic Swim Trials in both 1980 and 1984.

After college, Flowers worked as an assistant coach for Auburn University from 1984 to 1989. He left Auburn for a position as a coordinator in USA Swimming's National Team Division through 1993. Flowers returned to Auburn in 1995 as a swimming assistant coach where he remained through 1999. In 1999, Flowers returned to Colorado Springs to the U.S. Olympic Committee, where he managed the USOC Aquatics Center until 2007. In addition, Flowers also assisted with aquatics operations at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, airport operations at the 2006 Torino Olympic Winter Games, and he also handled logistics and airport operations at the 2007 Parapan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

In 2007, Flowers began working for U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, as National Team Manager and Resident Program Coach for the Paralympic swimming program. In 2009, Flowers was promoted to Associate Director of High Performance for the Paralympic swimming program and also served as head coach of the national team.

Jimi Flowers received the 2010 Disability Swimming Coach of the Year Award posthumously, after his untimely death at age 47 from a climbing accident. A U.S. Paralympics press report revealed these details, "In the early afternoon on Friday, July 10, 2009, Flowers and another experienced climber were descending Capitol Peak , one of Colorado's famous 14,000-foot mountains, near Aspen, when Flowers lost his footing and slid about 500 feet through snow chutes and rock bands before coming to a stop in a steep rocky section. He died from serious injuries sustained in the fall."

In addition to the Coach of the Year Award, Jimi was a 2010 inductee into the Tulane Athletics Hall of Fame. Also in 2010 U.S. Paralympics initiated an annual swimming meet in Jimi's honor.

Sources:

<http://usparalympics.org/news/2009/07/16/jimi-flowers-coach-character-friend-to-all/14354>

<http://www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/lane9/news/22198.asp>

<http://www.usaswimming.org/ViewNewsArticle.aspx?TabId=1&itemid=2882&mid=8712>