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### The Old Malarkey



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# Hall of Fame Picks Toomey

**P**ERMANENT TRIBUTE FOR Pioneer labors and more than a decade of dedicated service to one sport is embodied in the induction of a local sportsman into the "Hall of Fame" — only the second such honor ever accorded an area man.

The gentleman in question is Jim Toomey, who has just been voted into the Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame.

He is one of six persons just enshrined. The others are swimmers who have won fame in the rugged world of long-distance competition, two of whom competed here during the era of the Around Absecon Island swim.

As a representative of this area in such a shrine, Toomey succeeds the late Bill Upperman, of Atlantic City, who had earned world-wide fame in the world of angling and ichthyology and was elected to the Fishing Hall of Fame in 1952. Bill passed away in 1960.

Toomey's induction resulted from the rugged local competition, which Jim conceived and directed. The citation is worded:

**"James P. Toomey is honored for his contributions to marathon swimming for conceiving and conducting 11 outstanding annual 25-mile professional races at Atlantic City, N.J., U.S.A., between 1954 and 1964.**

**"Toomey, who was elected first president of the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation when it was formed in 1963, devised swimming races at Atlantic City that are still used as a standard of excellence for amateur and professional distance events around the world."**

The Toomey-conceived swim around the island came naturally to the resort man, a lifeguard on the Atlantic City Beach from 1937 until called into military service in World War II during 1942, a devotee of swimming and an oarsman. A persistent shore booster, Jim thought up the event as a vehicle to secure publicity for Atlantic City.

Toomey's name was proposed by Joe Grossman, former Atlantic City newspaperman and current secretary of the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation. Grossman was also one of the board of three members who voted on the nominees. The other members of the jury were Commander C. Gerald Forsberg, OBE, of Bath, England, president of the Channel Swimming Association, and Buck Dawson, executive director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. (Grossman, incidentally, is now with the U.S. Information Service and is attached to the American Embassy in Accra, Ghana.)

The five swimmers elected with Toomey included Elaine Gray of England, Shadia El Rageb of Egypt; Baptista Pereira of Portugal, Enrico Tiraboschi of Italy and Jason Zirganos of Greece.

Miss Gray's record includes 38 major distance swim triumphs and the women's speed record of 10 hours, 24 minutes for crossing the English Channel.

Miss El Rageb's pro career, featuring four marathon victories in her first year, followed an international string of conquests as an amateur, topped by eight unbeaten years as Egypt's national backstroke champion.

### NEGOTIATED 127-MILE SWIM

Pereira — who swam in the Atlantic City marathon — twice set the speed record for crossing the Gibraltar Strait, won the 1954 English Channel event and in 1959 swam 127 miles in the Tagus River.

Tiraboschi was the first person ever to swim the English Channel in the France-to-England direction. Receiving one thousand pounds for the 1923 feat, he donated the money to the International Swimming Federation.

Zirganos, Greek Army major, was decorated by King Paul for being first in his nation to negotiate the Channel to swim; he repeated three times). Also a competitor in the Atlantic City event, he had achieved a dozen major conquests from the 22-mile swim of Catalina Island off California to the 40-mile Bosphorus Strait in Turkey. He died "in harness," expiring of a heart attack after having covered 17 of the 18.5 miles swim of the Irish Sea in 1959.

Election of Toomey and the five strokesmiths brings to 54 the total number of people in the "Hall," among them such fabled names as Matthew Webb, first person ever to swim (1875) the English Channel, and Gertrude Ederle, American and first woman to accomplish the feat.

As with all other sports, marathon swimming's stars were named before construction of an actual shrine. However, under discussion, according to Grossman, is a site at Dover, England, where Captain Webb started it all back in '75.

The individuals already named to Marathon Swimming's Hall of Fame comprise an impressive list, some of the names well known here through the Around-Island events. Here's the roster of the 54:

- ARGENTINA — Pedro Candiotti, Antonio Abertondo, Horacio Iglesias, Carlos Larriera.
- AUSTRALIA — The Cavill Family, Annetta Kellerman, Linda McGill.
- CANADA — George Young, Cliff Lumsden, Marilyn Bell, Patty Thompson, George N. Duthie.
- CUBA — Jose Cortinas.
- DENMARK — Helge Jensen.
- EGYPT — Hassan Abdel Rehim, Abdel Latif Abou-Heif, General Ali Sabry, Shadia El Rageb.
- ENGLAND — Matthew Webb, Tom Blower, Jabaz Wolffo, Mercedes Gleitze, C. Gerald Forsberg, Brenda Sherrat, Sir William Butlin, Elaine Gray.
- GERMANY — Otto Kammerich.
- GREECE — Jason Zirganos.
- HOLLAND — Herman Willamse, Judith DeNijs, Johan Schans.
- INDIA — Mihir Sen.
- ITALY — Giulio Travaglio, Enrico Tiraboschi.
- NEW ZEALAND — Barry Davenport.
- PAKISTAN — Brojen Das.
- PORTUGAL — Baptista Pereira.
- SPAIN — Montserrat Treserras.
- UNITED STATES — Gertrude Ederle, Robert Dowling, Henry Sullivan, Lottie Schoemmel, Charles Zibhlaman, John Steward, Bob Thomas, Kay