



MARATHON SWIMMING HALL OF FAME

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MARATHON SWIMMING HALL OF FAME HONORS SIX

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Six names have been added to the roster of outstanding long-distance swimmers and contributors to that unique sport by the Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame.

Election of Miss Elaine Gray of England, Miss Shadia El Rageb of Egypt, Baptista Pereira of Portugal, Enrico Tiraboschi of Italy, James F. Toomey of the United States and Jason Zirganos of Greece has been announced by the Marathon Swimming Foundation, which has temporary headquarters in Washington.

The 1971 electees were chosen for MSHOF honors for a variety of exploits and services to the sport.

Elaine Gray was England's outstanding woman marathoner throughout her seven-year career, from 1963 through 1969. During that period she won 47 women's championships at distances from 2.5 to 13 miles and set 15 British women's records, six of which are still unbroken.

Miss Gray was seven-time winner of the Lake Bala 6-mile race; won both the British Long Distance Swimming Association's annual 5-mile championship and the Lake Bala three-mile title six times; was five-time winner of both the Lake Windermere 10.25-mile and the 8-mile Torbay events; was four-time victor in the Trentham Lake 3-mile race; won both the Weston-Claxton 7-mile and the 3-mile Poole Open Harbour races three times; twice took both the 10-mile Lulworth-to-Weymouth and the Fleetwood-Morecambe 13-mile races, and won the 10.25 mile Windermere International, the 9-mile Morecambe Bay, the Pick Mere 3-mile and the Schelde, Holland, International 2.5-mile races once.

Miss Gray's outstanding solo performance was a France-to-England English Channel swim in 1967 in which she broke the women's speed record with a 10-hour, 24-minute crossing. She also set a record for the 5.5-mile Coniston Water course of 2:31.25 in 1966.

Shadia El Rageb became the first Egyptian girl to win the title of Women's World Long-Distance Champion when, in 1971, she won the 20.5-mile Nile River, the 18.5-mile Aswan, the 18-mile Capri-to-Naples and the 12.5-mile Varna, Bulgaria, races during her first year as a professional marathon swimmer.

Prior to turning pro, Miss El Rageb won women's races of from 12 to 20 miles in Egypt, Bulgaria, Italy and Turkey. From 1960 through 1968, she reigned as Egypt's women's 100-meter backstroke champion.

Baptista Pereira appeared on the marathon swimming scene in 1953 setting a speed record for the Gibraltar Strait, swimming 10 miles from the European to the African shores in 5:04.00. Three years later he bettered his own time with a 4:34.06 record crossing of the same waters.

As a professional racer, the Portuguese marathoner won the 1954 English Channel event, making the France-to-England crossing in 12:25.00. He ranked high in races in the United States and France through 1959, and that year he performed his most outstanding feat -- swimming 127 miles on the Tagus River in Portugal in 28:43.00, for an European distance swimming record.

Enrico Tiraboschi was the first person ever to conquer the English Channel in the France-to-England direction. His 1923 time for his breaststroking performance was 16:23.00. Winner of a £1,000 purse for his feat, Tiraboschi donated the prize to the International Swimming Federation.

James P. Toomey was honored for his contributions to marathon swimming for conceiving and conducting 11 outstanding annual 25-mile professional ra-

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ces at Atlantic City, New Jersey, 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.

Jason Zirganos, a major in the Greek army, became the first of his nation to swim the English Channel and was decorated by King Paul for his 1949 swim, which took him from France to England in 18:30.00. During his career, Major Zirganos swam the English Channel four times.

As a professional racer, he represented Greece in events in France, England and the United States. Among his solo successes were four crossings of England's 10.25-mile Lake Windermere, all in 1951; an Island-to-Mainland crossing of the 22-mile Catalina Channel off California, and -- his most outstanding solo -- a 40-mile swim the length of the Bosphorus Strait in Turkey in 31 hours.

Zirganos died of a heart attack suffered while attempting to swim the North Channel (or Irish Sea) in 1959. He had completed 17 miles and was a mere 1.5 miles from the Scottish shore when he was fatally stricken.

The new electees join swimmers and contributors previously elected to the Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. Listed by country, the other 48 are:

Argentina: Pedro Candiotti, Antonio Abertondo, Horacio Iglesias, Carlos Larriera. Australia: The Cavill Family, Annette Kellerman, Linda McGill. Canada: George Young, Cliff Lumsdon, Marilyn Bell, Patty Thompson, George N. Duthie. Cuba: José Cortinas. Denmark: Helge Jensen. Egypt: Hassan Abdel Rehim, ^{Shadia El Fagel} Abdel Latif Abou-Heif, General Ali Sabry. England: Matthew Webb, Tom Blower, ^{Clare Gray} Jabez Wolffe, Mercedes Gleitze, C. Gerald Forsberg, Brenda Sherrat, Sir William Butlin.

GREECE: Major Ioann Zerganos.

Germany: Otto Kammerich. Holland: Herman Willemsse, Judith DeNijs, Johan Schans. India: Mihir Sen. Italy: Ciulio Travaglio, New Zealand: Barry Davenport. Portugal: Roberto Pereira. Pakistan: Brojen Das. Spain: Montserrat Tresserras. United States: Gertrude Ederle, Robert Dowling, Henry Sullivan, Lottie Schoemmel, Charles Zibbleman, John Sigmund, Bert Thomas, Keo Nakama, Tom Park, Greta Andersen, Johnny Weissmuller, Florence Chadwick, David Smith, Mary Martha Sinn, William Wrigley, Jr.; James P. Toomey.

The Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame is conducted by the Marathon Swimming Foundation, organized in 1971 to compile records of long-distance swimming in all its forms and to promote and support the sport. A permanent location for the Hall of Fame has not yet been selected.

Electees to the MSHOF for 1971 were chosen by a jury comprised of Commander C. Gerald Forsberg, O.B.E., of Bath, England, President of the Channel Swimming Association; Buck Dawson, Executive Director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, and Joe Grossman of Washington, D.C., Secretary of the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation.

Former professional world marathon champion Cliff Lemond of Toronto, Can.

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