

Jack Nelson in Nyad's *Other Shores*, 1978

Note: Nyad doesn't write a word about sexual abuse in *Other Shores*. She gives no hint of the allegations with which she ostensibly went public in 1971 or '72.

Anyone can search the book by keyword here:

<https://archive.org/details/othershores00nyad/page/18/mode/2up>

excerpts from pp. 17–19

When I was eleven years old and in the seventh grade, the geography teacher said that anyone who came out for the junior high swimming team would get an A in geography. This kind of bribery appealed to me, so I showed up, suit in hand, on the pool deck that afternoon. **The coach, Jack Nelson, who had already coached several young women to national titles, later became the coach of the women's Olympic team in Montreal, 1976. He helped me to improve enough within that first year to become the best in the state of Florida at both the 100-meter and 200-meter backstroke."**

Nelson explained to me that I had two assets common to all world-class swimmers.

First, I had the genetic ability, a feel for the water and the perfect physique for a swimmer — a slender body with a relatively high center of gravity, enormous Strength in the upper body and very little weight in the hips and legs. And second, I had the psychological hunger to put myself through pain when the goal warranted it. As it turned out, Nelson was right.

From age eleven to age sixteen I lived a spartan life without the usual adolescent uncertainty. I wanted to be the best swimmer in the world, and there was nothing else. Schoolwork was easy for me. Friendships were also easy for me. **Top-flight swimmers from all over the country were sent down to our school to swim with Nelson.** This extremely talented group of young women shared both an obsession about the work we were performing and a mature seriousness about pursuing our goals. I made lifetime buddies during those years. These were friendships cultivated through the sharing of disciplines; I had no interest in other social interaction.

I remember the pain in my eyes as if it were yesterday. **Coach Nelson has subsequently told interviewers that I was the hardest worker he'd ever had.** I would stop after a repeat, throw my guts up in the gutter and push off again for the next one. I wasn't afraid to dig down for everything I had. And the hard work paid off. At sixteen I was not the very best in the world, but I was damn good.

[Nyad contracts viral endocarditis and claims she] "spent three months in strict bed rest. . . . I had become so weak and had lost so much weight during those three months that it was a full year until I was my strong self again. That senior year was a frustrating disappointment. **I tried like hell and Coach Nelson and the kids were all behind me,** but I just wasn't strong enough. Any outside hope for the 1968 Olympic games was crushed; it was time for college where women at that time had neither scholarships nor adequate coaching, so I bid swimming a sad adieu.

from "About the Author," p. 177

Diana Nyad was born in New York City and raised in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She began swimming when she was six months old and **started training seriously at age eleven, under Olympic coach Jack Nelson.** An attack of endocarditis at age sixteen and the subsequent three months in bed dashed all hopes of Olympic medals. She began training for marathon swimming in 1970. While training and swimming, Diana also attended Emory University in Atlanta, and the Universite de Dijon, and graduated with honors, Phi Beta Kappa, from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois, in 1973.