## Nancy Kyrka Hall of Fame Story – 2015

Nancy learned to swim in 2nd grade through the Red Cross program. After completing all their levels, she joined a swim team and began the life of practicing and having parents drive to workouts and swim meets. Her two brothers also swam during this time and have enjoyed success as adults as well. Nick set a US record in the 200M breast, and Nate has placed second in triathlon Worlds. She is very appreciative of her parents through all those early years.

In High School, she swam on the local AAU and Brookfield Central in Brookfield, WI teams.

She was the first woman at her high school to receive a sports letter. Her success in high school allowed her to set WI state records. Looking to extend this career into college, she wrote the college coach at ASU, which at that time was the best US women's college swim team. She specifically asked the coach if she cut any swimmers and was told she did not cut. She went to ASU and she was cut the first year. Undaunted, she joined the intramural women's water polo team and travelled to CA and to Ohio for Nationals.

Fast-forward to adult life, and her children were taken to early lessons, and swam on the age group club team. At this point Nancy was the volunteer extraordinaire, with duties such as timing, concession stand, stroke and turn officiating, and serving on the swim board.

She became a USA certified swim coach, renewed her Life Guard certification and was a swim coach for the Club Team. In addition, she taught swimming and lifeguarded at the Y.

Her experience as a Masters swimmer started when she learned about adult workouts while watching her 5 year old at a tumbling class. She decided to try it out, and this began a 25-year journey with the local group in Rochester. She has been a regular fixture at meets for the past 10 years, and would occasionally go to a meet during the preceding 20 years. She continues to workout because she finds swimming soulful, and enjoys feeling healthy, and meeting people who enjoy swimming like she does.

The people who have influenced her most to continue Masters have been her teammates. She feels lucky to have had some very good coaches. Her husband, Jim, has always been her biggest supporter. Nancy comments that he has never complained and he has been with her at most of her swimming trips. She continues, "He has driven me to WI in a snow storm and to Alabama and been with me in CA, Puerto Rico, AZ, TX, Ohio, Indiana, NC, Oregon, NJ, and all over the US."

Her favorite workouts are on someone's birthday, when the team swims the "age of the swimmer", and she especially remembers her own 50th birthday; 50 x 50's on 1 minute.

Swimming outdoors is her favorite, especially at Soldier's Field, MN. More recently her favorite pool is Potter Park, FL. with the palm trees and birds flying overhead and watching the sunrise. "I love swimming in the rain and watching the drops hit the water." Her favorite event is the 50 Free, followed by the IMs. Her best race was at Fresno Nationals when she was in the 55-60 age group broke 1:00 in the 100 yard free. She hadn't done that since high school, and hasn't done it since.

When she turned 55 she was surprised to see that she had ranked in the top 10 in the world (FINA Top Ten). "I was very happy to get 1st place (and All-American) in the 400 meter free at Auburn Nationals when I was 56. I have swum my best swims as part of relays."

A review of Nancy's years as a MN LMSC swimmer brings to mind the word "domination." During the 14 years before she moved to Florida, she had 57 placements on USMS Top Ten lists plus 14 in relays. She currently holds 44 MN LMSC records. At one point she held all 18 State records in SCY in her age group. She has been an All American in distance and has placed on the FINAs annual Top Ten lists eight times individually and four times for relays.

A memorable travel experience was going to Puerto Rico for Nationals with her husband. After the swim meet, they toured the Rain Forest, went on a kayak trip in a bioluminescent bay, and saw the Arecibo telescope that was in the movie *Contact*.

Memorable events include pool and open water activities:

<u>For pool experience</u>, her most memorable masters event was breaking 1:00 in the 100 yard free, placing 1st at Auburn Nationals, and the 4 relay US and World records. She also enjoyed going to San Antonio (Spring Nationals-2015) and swimming with her brother, Nate.

<u>For Open Water</u> accolades in 2012, she was a Long Course All Star. That year she and her husband traveled to Oregon, New Jersey, North Carolina, and to Lake Minnetonka. The 10-miler in Lake Minnetonka is the most challenging swim she has ever done.

Nancy and her husband have worked for USMS for the past year as web developers. She continues to be happy to contribute to swimming on an administrative level because of her passion for USMS. She was treasurer for MN LMSC for 3 years, and served as FL treasurer for two.

Obviously Nancy enjoys giving back to the sport that has given her so much. Teaching swimming lessons and coaching gives great satisfaction. Simply counting for teammates in distance events is an enjoyable experience too. In summary, Nancy personifies what Masters Swimming <sup>TM</sup> is all about.