

John Bergman

Minnesota Masters Swimming Hall of Fame

Class of 2019

On July 19, 1973, John Bergman stepped to the edge of the Minneapolis Golf Club pool (there were no starting blocks) and swam in the first individual swimming event in Minnesota Masters history. He easily won his age group, beating his older brother Clark, and set the first of his many, many State Records.

This all started with encouragement from John's mother, who placed him in the Midway YMCA swimming program at the age of six. Hard work—and the opportunities provided by his parents—brought success. At Johnson High School, he never lost a race, and similar success followed at the University of Minnesota. John went on to Medical School, coached at the U of M for \$1.00 per hour, and then did a stint with the US Marine Corps, but never lost touch with his love for swimming.

In 1971, two years before becoming a part of Minnesota Masters history, John began his Masters swimming career while serving with the Marines at El Toro Naval Air Station in San Diego. There, he lobbied for, and was granted permission to swim in a Navy meet in San Diego, and then was flown to Amarillo, TX, for the 2nd-ever Masters Nationals, helping the Navy team to 2nd overall in the team standings, placing Top-7 in all his individual events, and leading Navy to the 200 Free Relay National Championship.

By 1974, John had finished his residency and started a family. His attention turned to his family and his dermatology practice. Dedicated to his family, he chose to spend his time with his growing children, and turned to running for his exercise, usually at 10:00 at night after the children were asleep. As his family grew, John's passion for swimming stayed in his heart, but running remained the outlet. In that time, John completed 13 Twin Cities Marathon, and supported his children as they learned the wonderful lessons found in the world of competitive swimming.

Not surprisingly, it was family that brought John back to Masters Swimming. His daughter Megan really wanted to swim at the 2014 Nationals in Santa Clara, but wondered how she could fit the trip into the household budget. John immediately seized the chance to swim with his daughter, so he entered, and underwrote the trip for Megan. At that meet, John not only shared the meet with Megan, but had his own moment in the sun, taking two thirds (100 Fly and 400 IM) and placed in all his events but one.

John's commitment to family has never waned, but now includes his own second swimming career, that of his children, and his eleven grandchildren—ten of whom are swimmers (the 11th is only five years old). Between his early career and his current participation, John has a bucketful

of state championships, 39 and 12 individual and relay Top-10 marks, and he sets state records almost every time he dives in these days.

But despite this prodigious record of swimming achievement, John's character and kindness are worthy of a Hall of Fame of their own. His love for family, his respect and fondness for those who make Minnesota Masters work, and his genuine love for the good in this sport deserve recognition. John Bergman is one of the few who truly understands where the good stuff in Masters Swimming resides.