

# Paul Windrath's Hall of Fame Story 2014

Written October 2012

Paul Windrath learned to swim quickly when tossed in a creek in upstate New York at the age of 6. He went on to participate in AAU as an age-grouper, and had a very successful high school career, as State Champion and school record holder, as well as being named most valuable swimmer all four years. He continued his swimming at Dartmouth College and once again became a school record holder.

After college, he was out of the pool for a while. After a bicycle accident left him nursing a facial injury and a trashed bike, he decided maybe the pool would be a safer environment for exercise. Moving around led to being involved in different Masters programs in Illinois and Ohio prior to landing in Minnesota in 1982. Paul spent 25 years being involved with Minnesota Masters as a swimmer and volunteer extraordinaire.

Paul has 5 different workouts that he has cycled through for the past 20 years. Wednesdays finds him doing 90 minutes of 100's on the 1:30. His favorite practice set is 20 x 75 on 1:30. This must leave a little more time for chatting between swims. He competed every year from 1977 – 2004, then took 10 years off and is back at it this year. Favorite pools in the country range from Federal Way in WA to his current home YMCA in Oneonta, NY. The St Croix River remains his favorite open water venue. In the pool, the 200 Back is his favorite event. In 1994, he went on to set the world record in SCM 200 Back in Rochester NY.

Paul felt one of his best races was the 200 SCY freestyle in 1994 at the University Aquatic Center, where he went a 1:51. [Paul remembered it as a 1:49, but the USMS website says different.] Swimming has also taken Paul to the Pan Pacific Championships in Maui and he swam Alcatraz in 2004 and 2010. Memorable one time only workouts were a) 2000 lengths of the pool to welcome in the year 2000 and b) 100 x 200 on 3:00 completed with Tina Neill.

Paul gathered 109 Top Ten National times as a MN Swimmer, with 7 first place times, as well as 7 Top Ten Relay times. All American status has been earned individually 4 times in the pool, and twice as a relay member. In addition he has attained All Americans status once for distance (open water). His best times in most of the events came at the age of 40.

Paul had some wonderful memories of distance event. He commented that "his best day ever" was an open water swim with Peggy Kratz in the early 2000s. They started swimming at 6 AM, and did not get out until 1 PM. Another memorable swim was the 10K in St Louis Park. His female companion had enough with the strap chaffing and removed her top. Paul joined in and removed his suit.

Paul also was a trend setter in that he remembers swimming wearing a women's suit at the 1980 LCM Nationals in Canton OH in 1980 and did so without apparent disqualification. This was way before FINA got real involved with all the swimsuit rules in existence today.

Volunteering has also been a big part of Paul's Masters swimming life. Organizational talents led Paul to coordinate swimming locally (Plymouth Middle Schools and later in Red Wing) for most of his time living in Minnesota. He not only would set up workouts for Masters groups, but also would get in and swim the assigned plan for the day. In addition to helping run many local and State meets, he was the co-meet director for 2 USMS Nationals held at the Aquatic Center.