

## **TESSA WRIGHTSON AND TIM BENNETT RECOGNIZED AS INDIANA SWIMMING'S 2018 GENE LEE OUTSTANDING SWIMMERS OF THE YEAR**

The **Gene Lee Award** is given annually at the Indiana Swimming Long Course Senior State Championships to the outstanding Indiana Swimming Female and Male Athletes of the Year. The Award was named after Gene Lee a former coach for the Indianapolis Athletic Club and Rivera Swim Club, who dedicated his life to the Indiana AAU and to the state's swimmers for almost 20 years. He brought recognition to Indiana Swimming through his excellent coaching, enabling swimmers to attain world prominence. He also provided a model for many young coaches to imitate, truly professionalizing coaching. Gene's truest contribution lies in the fact that he made a significant difference in the lives of many hundreds of young people as well as adults. He used swimming as a vehicle to teach young people how to deal with life.

To be eligible for the Gene Lee Outstanding Swimmer Award, athletes must be nominated by their coach and have graduated from the 12th Grade in 2018. The nominees must have exemplified outstanding achievement in swimming, academics, community service, and leadership during their high school years in Indiana.

This year's recipient of the **Gene Lee Outstanding Female Athlete of the Year is Tessa Wrightson** from **Zionsville Swim Club**. Tessa is a USA Swimming Nationals qualifier, an IHSAA State Champion, and an Indiana Swimming State Champion. She is a member of her school's National Honor Society ranking in the top 15% of her graduating class. Tessa volunteers at her church and is a member of Best Buddies, which supports a local children's hospital. She also coaches her local neighborhood youth swim team and will continue her swimming career this fall at Purdue University.

This year's recipient of the **Gene Lee Outstanding Male Athlete of the Year is Tim Bennett**, a member of **Fishers Area Swimming Tigers**. Tim is a USA Swimming Juniors Qualifier, a top 3 finisher at the IHSAA State Championships, and has numerous top 8 finishes at Indiana Swimming Age Group and Senior State Championships. He has a 4.71 GPA and has been honored as a Shelbourne Athlete of the Month at North Central High School. He is also a member of his school's state finalist show choir, is a volunteer teacher of English as a second language, and helps with philanthropic projects at FAST. In the words of his coach, "Tim is always watching out for the younger kids, including being a big brother to the foster children in his family. He is always willing to demonstrate and help teach skills in practice and is a great role model to younger swimmers on his team." Tim will continue his swimming career this fall at Gardner-Webb.

