



## **ROBERT C. (BOB) McDOWELL**

The 2020 recipient of the Joseph G. Rogers Award is Robert C. (Bob) McDowell, recognized for his long and impactful commitment to YMCA Competitive Swimming. For over 40 years, Bob has served the YMCA movement through progressive leadership roles in the YMCAs of Philadelphia and vicinity, upstate New York and currently as the CEO of the Riverbrook YMCA, with over 8,000 members in the communities of Norwalk, Redding and Wilton, Connecticut. Throughout his career, Bob has impacted the lives of thousands of community members through the YMCA's commitment to nurture the potential of every child and teen, to improve one's health and well-being and to give back and provide support to our neighbors.

After graduation from West Chester University with a degree in Education, Bob started working part-time as a lifeguard and swim team coach. He later took on full-time responsibilities as an aquatic director and then subsequent executive level positions with the Hatboro Area and Ambler Branch YMCA and eventually as the Vice President of Membership and Program Development for the YMCA of Philadelphia & Vicinity.

Throughout his YMCA career, he remained active in competitive swimming at the local level, serving as a timer, official, announcer and as the President of the Tri-Hampton YMCA Parent's Association. He also fulfilled the role of President of the Lower Bucks County PA Swim League from 1998 to 2006 [24 Teams].

Bob was selected to serve on the National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee in 2007 and served as Chairman from 2011 to 2012. During those 2 years, he provided leadership to the Committee as they accomplished the following:

- Created and funded a Financial Assistance Program for our YMCA National Championship Athletes as well as developed a Leadership Development Program for Athletes through the Athlete Representative Initiative.
- Launched the "Stay with Us" program that helps to fund our event initiatives and subsidize our events in order to enhance the experience for our athletes, volunteers and spectators.
- Created a revised re-grant Program through the Y of the USA for Learn to Swim programs.
- Organized and conducted a successful short course meet in 2011 despite having no use of the existing bleachers and in 2012 selected Greensboro to host our Short Course Nationals.
- Successfully conducted Long Course Nationals at Georgia Tech after 10 years in Maryland.
- Revisited and Re-Focused our Strategic Plan to concentrate on the following: Grow competitive swimming and diving in low income communities; Improve movement-wide communication regarding the benefits of the program; Leverage our relationship with USA Swimming to enhance the program; and evaluate the training needs for coaches and program administrators.
- Revised/Updated the YMCA of the USA's "Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports" that was launched 9/1/2012
- Expanded the work of the Group Representatives.
- Added a Moment of Remembrance during our Short Course Meet.
- Published a Meet Director Handbook and updated/revised Officials Training format/program.

Additionally, Bob served on the Rogers Award Committee from 2008 to 2013 and represented the YMCA as a delegate to the USAS Convention from 2010 to 2012. He was also instrumental in the development of the YMCA Masters Swim Meet and our Long Course Swimming Championships.

Most notably, Bob has been the Public Address Announcer for the Long Course National Championship Meet since 2008 and has served as the on-line broadcast announcer for the Short Course National Championship Meet since 2011. He also enjoys volunteering as the PA announcer for many local, regional and state High School and USA meets as well as various NCAA conference championship meets. He is currently the Chair the Y of the USA Competitive Swimming CEO/COO Partners Council.

In addition to serving as a member of the Elder Board for Hope Church, Bob volunteers for the Wilton Kiwanis Club and has been a volunteer coach for the Wilton Little League. Bob is married to his wife of 37 years, Karen, who swam at YMCA Short Course Nationals in 1976. They have 3 awesome adult children- Briana and her husband Tommy, Jenna and her husband Tim, and Bobby affectionately known as The Prince or Junior. All three of the McDowell children swam in our YMCA National Championship Meets.