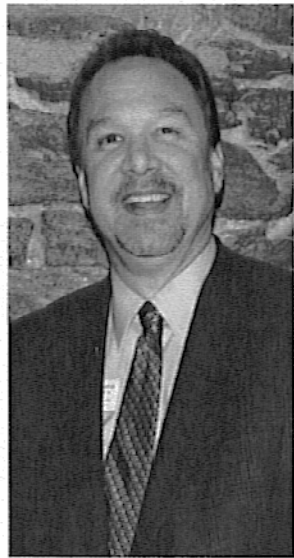


2009 Joseph G. Rogers Award

For dedication, accomplishment and excellence in
YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving



BRUCE GRIFFIN

Bruce Griffin's involvement with YMCA Swimming began as a swimmer and later in his first coaching job as an assistant coach with the Raleigh YMCA in North Carolina in 1977. Bruce continued coaching and working at the local YMCA as a youth counselor while attending North Carolina State University. In 1981, he became the head coach at the nearby Chapel Hill YMCA where he stayed until 1984. After a short time coaching a YMCA/USA Swimming team in Georgia, he returned to Chapel Hill in 1986 as head coach and aquatics director until 1987. Following a brief stint in the for-profit world, Bruce rejoined the Capital Area YMCA (formerly the Raleigh YMCA) in 1990. Bruce began a very successful ten-year period as the head coach of a team that grew to over 400 swimmers. His teams won three YMCA local course team national championships with over 30 individual and relay national championships. The program sent several swimmers to U.S. Nationals, many accepted collegiate scholarships and they competed in the Olympic Games. Former team member David Fox captured a Gold Medal in Atlanta in 1996.

Bruce has always been committed to the swimmers and making their YMCA experience special. He created the Capital Classic YMCA Meet in 1993 in Raleigh. From the beginning, the meet celebrated the mission, spirit and sportsmanship of the YMCA. Every year featured a different theme with teams dressed in costumes at final meets. Each session started with a devotion and prayer with a focus on the core values of the YMCA. Bruce's special touches and celebration of the YMCA made the meet the fastest and most popular YMCA meet outside of YMCA Nationals. In 2000, Bruce felt that athletes at Short Course YMCA Nationals could benefit from a pre-meet pep rally where they could meet other athletes, exchange swim caps, be inspired by an Olympian and get focused on the special week ahead. Today, the Athlete Welcome Party is a regular part of the YMCA Nationals experience for several hundred athletes, coaches and parents. As a member of the National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Advisory Committee, Bruce advocated that athletes should offer the opening devotion before each session of the National Championship meets, now the protocol since 1998.

Throughout his career, Bruce has been involved in helping the YMCA coaching community. In 1996, the YMCA of the United States introduced its competitive swimming education program with three levels of certification. Bruce assisted with the creation of the program, writing two chapters in the Principles of YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving manual as well as contributing sample documents for the appendices of all three manuals. He became a Faculty Trainer for the courses and traveled throughout the country educating coaches and volunteers about the uniqueness of the YMCA approach to competitive swimming and diving programs. From 1996 through 1999, Bruce served as the Field Coordinator for YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. He was a member of the YMCA Coaches Association Executive Committee from 1996 to 2000, serving a term as president. He also served on the YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Advisory Committee and wrote the national newsletter from 1998 until the advent of the National YMCA Swimming and Diving website.

Of all of his YMCA accomplishments, Bruce Griffin is perhaps best known as "The Voice" of YMCA Nationals. In 1999, shortly after he stopped coaching senior level swimmers, Bruce accepted an offer to be the announcer at the Short Course National Championship Meet. He has served in that role ever since. Over the past ten years he has added his own flair and special touches leading off each morning with his signature "Good Morning Fort Lauderdale" call as well as the daily weather report from "back home." He continues to prepare his own music list for Finals each evening and maintains pages of statistics from past meets to keep the spectators informed. Bruce both orchestrates and reflects the meet atmosphere from behind the microphone, his folksy Southern accent rising and falling with the action in the pool. He weaves humor into an otherwise data-driven job and has built an almost familial relationship with the community of YMCA swimmers, coaches, volunteers and fans. He loves his job and feels responsible for providing swimmers, coaches and fans with the best information and entertainment he can in his role as announcer.

Bruce is currently an Executive Director for the West Chester Area YMCA in Pennsylvania, a branch of the YMCA of the