

**2017 Joseph G. Rogers Award
For Long and Exceptional Leadership and Accomplishments in YMCA
Competitive Swimming & Diving Benefiting all Swimmers, Divers,
Coaches, Parents and Volunteers**

Gary Cox



Gary Cox started his YMCA career June 19, 1989 with the then-named North Suburban YMCA and Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center in Brown Deer Wisconsin. Prior to this he had no affiliation or connection to the YMCA movement, but after one day of interviewing he saw that the philosophy of the YMCA matched what he had been talking about all day and the rest is history! While at the YMCA, in addition to serving as the Schroeder Diving Coach he also served as Competitive Aquatic Director, Program Operations Director, and the Membership Service Director.

When the YMCA introduced its core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility, Gary didn't have to change his tune. He had long been counseling his athletes not only to strive, but to live and act virtuously. He is a natural teacher who has also mentored and supported many coaches during his career. He has offered advice and tutored several peers and young coaches who are now actively affecting athletes around the country. He is fiercely competitive, honest to a fault, giving, caring, a wonderful father and husband but throughout his career, his hallmark trait has been his humility.

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Gary has long been a well-known figure in the diving community- YMCA, USA Diving and NCAA Diving. Before he worked for the Y Gary coached club diving and was an assistant diving coach at his alma mater University of Nebraska –Lincoln. He also served as the Diving Coach for the Menomonee Falls High School in Wisconsin and Head Diving Coach for the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee where he was multiple times Coach of the Year. Along the way Gary has coached numerous YMCA National Champions, a 2001 USA Diving Junior National Champion, and the Schroeder YMCA to the 1997 Short Course National Championship. He also served as the 2001 USA Diving National Team Coach for the Junior Pan-American team. In 1993 Gary was the recipient of the Moose Moss Diving Award for contributions to YMCA Diving.

In addition to coaching, Gary has always been active in diving administration at all levels - state, local and national. He has a knack for conducting superb dive contests and his meets stand out for being well organized and staying on time. Over the years he has trained many volunteers to run great contests and this is reflected most notably in the YMCA National Diving Championships.

Arguably, without Gary Cox there would not be competitive diving in the YMCA movement today. Gary was approached and accepted the role of volunteer Diving Coordinator with the YMCA of the USA Competitive Swimming and Diving Committee in 2008. At his first committee meeting Gary was charged with the revitalization of our YMCA National Diving Championships. With the full support of the committee he took a more “hands-on” approach to the meet, knowing that it would take more than a year to make this happen. Gary’s expertise, knowledge, humility and relationship skills proved to be important components in the successful transformation of the meet. He effectively communicated with coaches, divers, families and YMCAs to promote the YMCA Championships as special and different from any other meet.

The word started to spread regarding the quality of the meet - high level of competition, efficiently run and a strong focus on the kids. Thanks to the support of the volunteer team Gary assembles, including past participants of the Championships, the meet continues to grow today. When Gary started in 2009 there were 23 athletes and 41 entries. The meet has expanded to 111 divers and 264 entries in 2016. Preliminary numbers for the 2017 meet indicate approximately 160 participants.

Gary also used the United States Aquatic Sports convention to put the YMCA back on the map with the diving community. With the approval of the committee, the YMCA of the USA has joined with USA Diving, USA Diving Foundation, and Springboards to sponsor two evenings of receptions for coaches and volunteers. This started the conversation as to “why the Y was doing this”.

Gary currently serves on the USA Diving Board of Directors and the YMCA Swimming and Diving Operations Council. He and his wife Kristin have two sons, Danny and Nate, both past YMCA national champions and Danny won the Moose Moss award in 2006.