



DR. JOEL A. BLACK, JR.

The 2018 recipient of the Joseph G. Rogers Award is Dr. Joel A. Black, Jr., recognized for his long and impactful volunteer service to YMCA Competitive Swimming. For over 35 years, Joel has served the sport at many levels, leading to his most recent service as the Officials Chair for the YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Program. A student of the rules, a trainer to officials at all levels and a constant resource, Joel is best known as a patient and humble official committed to creating a fair and supportive atmosphere in all meets, from a local YMCA Dual Meet to our YMCA National Championships.

Born in Anderson and raised in Honea Path, South Carolina, Joel attended Clemson University, and later completed his Doctor of Dental Surgery and achieved his Certificate in Pediatric Dentistry from Emory University. He was recognized as the Outstanding Graduate of his class from the American Society of Dentistry for Children. Two days prior to their graduation, Joel married Louise Wauford. Following Military Service in the U.S. Army, he began his Pediatric Dentistry practice. Both are going strong today at 45 and 42 years, respectively. His love and commitment for the sport of swimming is truly a family affair. His wife, Louise, was an active volunteer serving multiple roles with their local Y. Joel and Louise are the proud parents of two former YMCA, and YMCA National swimmers who continued their involvement with swimming as swim coaches. Alex coaches with the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina and Suzanne, a former National YMCA Champion in the 1650 Yard Freestyle served as a coach with the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina, and later with Birmingham Swim League.

Joel began officiating local high school football in 1977, which he continued for 24 years. He became a certified swimming official in 1981 as a volunteer with the Winston-Salem YMCA. His swim official roles extended to North Carolina Swimming, USA Swimming and the NCAA, and reached local, state, regional, national and international levels. He has served on the USA Swimming Officials Committee since 1994, on the Rules Committee, and as a member of the National Board of Review. On deck, Joel has served as an official and deck referee at numerous USA Swimming National Championships, Olympic Trials and even internationally at three Pan Pacific Swimming Championships. In 2005, USA Swimming honored Joel with their Ken Pettigrew Award as an outstanding official. His joint service to YMCA Swimming and USA Swimming was one of several key elements to drive the decision for adoption of USA Swimming rules as our YMCA technical rules.

As a YMCA Official, his service extended to his role as an instructor of Officials, Regional Chairman of Officials Trainers, a YMCA National Faculty Trainer, a member of the YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Advisory Committee and later as the National YMCA Officials Chair. He has served as a starter, deck referee and later, meet referee for multiple YMCA National Short and Long Course Championships. In 2009, he was honored with the Connie Carroll Award for officiating.

His article, *The Swimming Official- 10 Points of Self-Evaluation* is the standard resource used by many local, statewide and regional swimming organizations as a guide for improving the quality of swimming officials through a self-reflective activity. His article stressed "by understanding yourself and identifying your strengths and weaknesses as an official, you open the door for improvement every meet". Joel never ceased his efforts to perfect his craft. He stated "there are always areas in need of improvement. Officials who are satisfied with all past performances are either lazy, disinterested or simply haven't had their weaknesses exploited (they will eventually). You should always work under the assumption that you are only as good as your next call and should make every effort to ensure a good one"

His relationship with his fellow officials is best represented by his referral to each as his "cousins." Most importantly, Joel enjoys teaching, training others and presenting around the topic of officiating. He serves as a shining example of an experienced rules authority with a compassionate temperament and a commitment to creating a positive experience for the athlete, coaches, his fellow officials, meet volunteers and spectators. He is unceasingly humble while striving to leave everyone and everything a little better than he found them.