

2008

Joseph G. Rogers Award

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



Rich Mueller will receive the YMCA's most prestigious award for his years of service and outstanding commitment to YMCA Swimming and Diving. The Joseph G. Rogers Award will be presented by the National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Advisory Committee during the National YMCA Swimming and Diving Championships on March 31 at the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Rich has been involved with swimming and diving since 1968 when 4 of his 5 children started swimming competitively. He belonged to the YMCA in the Chicago area since his childhood and swam leisurely but had played a variety of other sports as he was growing up including volleyball, baseball, softball and basketball. He was involved in starting a basketball team, softball team & league, volleyball team & league, and was also active in the church.

Observing his children's swim meets sparked an interest in learning how the meets were run and how they could be improved. He started volunteering an enormous amount of time and energy in order to help the meets run smoothly and efficiently. As his interest grew, he would no longer be a spectator but would have some sort of involvement in the sport from this time on and eventually led into a long term passion of his. Being involved in a family business of printing from 1950 - 2001, Rich spent a majority of his limited free time offering his assistance in some way to the sport. He was determined to learn all aspects of the sport and how to most effectively operate everything associated with it ultimately making it more enjoyable for the athletes and spectators alike.

Rich has been an active, enthusiastic volunteer and Level III Swim Official since 1968 at a local, regional, and national level. He is a Swim Official Clinic Instructor teaching other officials throughout the state. Rich was Chairman of the YMCA Town and Country District from 1973 - 1995, member of the Illinois YMCA State Swim Committee during the same time frame. He has been referee, starter, and timing operator at various District and State YMCA championships. He has worked at the YMCA Short Course Nationals from 1972 to 2005 as a referee, starter, stroke and turn judge, and timing console operator. Through his printing business, he has printed heat sheets, programs and any other forms associated with the meets as well as published the newsletters for the National YMCA Swim Committee. Since 1980, he has been a member of the National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee.

With the YMCA Masters, Richard has officiated a majority of their Championship meets since 1972 as a referee or starter. Additionally, he has been an official of a large number of YMCA Long Course National Championship meets from its inception of the Long Course meet until 2003. Richard was a member of the Board of Directors at the B. R. Ryall YMCA which is where his children swam. He served as the Parents Chairman of the B. R. Ryall Swim Team as well as Aquatic Chairman of the B. R. Ryall YMCA.

Rich received numerous awards from the B. R. Ryall YMCA during the years he was most active as his children were swimming. Amongst them were a Certificate of Appreciation: For grateful appreciation of outstanding contributions to the B. R. Ryall Swim Team in 1973 -1974, another Certificate of Appreciation for recognition of dedication and outstanding volunteer service to B. R. Ryall Swim Team in 1973, as well as 1977- 1978. In 1975 he received an award from the YMCA as Man of the Year, Another Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service and support of the YMCA program 1980 -1981, in 1980 Chicago MRC YMCA Award: Layman of the Year, as well as the 1982-1983 Central Swimming Inc. Official of the Year.

Rich has been an active contributor to Masters Swimming in Illinois since 1983 as a Senior Official. He's been Officials' Chairman and has refereed most Illinois State Long and Short course Master Swim Meets since 1985. He's been responsible for writing, publishing, and mailing Illinois Masters newsletters 3-4 times annually from 1985-2001.

Additionally, Rich has been involved in AAU as a referee, zone chairman, as well as zone manager since 1974. He helped to design, write, and publish the Officials' certification program and was the test administrator. He served as Officials' Chairman since 1974, which was the time United States Swimming (now USA-S) began. He also was the state Junior Olympic referee and starter.

In the summer leagues, Rich was the founder of the DuPage Swim and Dive Conference, refereed many Park District Championship meets, was Parents Chairman of the Lombard Swim Team and Chairman of the DuPage Swim and Dive Conference. For the country clubs, Rich also was Chairman and Officials' Chairman of the Country Club Swim League from 1985 - 2006, as well as Officials' Chairman of the Dolphin Country Club Swim League.

For Illinois Swimming, Rich was certified in 1972 to officiate in Illinois High School competitions and is still active today. He's the official assignment person for approximately 20 schools from 2000 until now. He's served as a Sectional referee and starter and a State diving referee. He served as the Vice President of Illinois Swimming Officials Association from 1978-1985. Awards include the Central Swimming Inc. Official of the Year 1982-1983 and the Norman A. Romsted Swimming and Diving Officials Award in 1988.

On the college level, Rich has been referee of Division III NCAA Swimming Championships, referee and starter of Conference Swim Championships, NAIA District Championships, Illinois State Community College Swim Championships, as well as Illinois State College Invitational events.

His love of what he does and the genuine concern for the athletes and keeping their interest in their sport has kept Rich involved in swimming.