

THE 1993 JOSEPH G. ROGERS AWARD

for Dedication, Accomplishments,
and Excellence
in YMCA Competitive
Swimming and Diving

is presented to

WESLEY E. WALKER



Dedication, Leadership, Insight, Perspective and Values all describe Wesley Walker. Born in Danville, Illinois, Walker became a member of the YMCA at age nine. He participated in all youthful endeavors, especially the YMCA Junior Leaders program. From those early years Wes always wanted to be a part of the YMCA and indeed it has played a major part in his life. He learned to love the YMCA through his Physical Director, Glen Murphy, who went on to serve as the Executive Director of the Danville YMCA until his retirement. Walker captained the Danville High School Swim team prior to entering Eastern Illinois University. Since Eastern did not have a Swimming Program, Walker's competitive career ended, but not his love for the sport. His YMCA professional career started at the Kankakee, Illinois YMCA in 1956 where he continues to serve as Chief Executive Officer.

Among his many accomplishments:

- Started the Swim team program at Kankakee, IL YMCA in 1956.
- Member, National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee, 1974 -1985, serving as its Value Education Chairman.
- Chairman, National Youth Leadership Conference, 1985, on its 100th Anniversary.
- Coordinator -"Everybody Swims - Everybody Wins", a film presentation by the National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee.
- North Central Physical Director of the Year, Mid 1960's.
- YMCA International Leadership Award, 1991.
- Lincolnland (Illinois) Leadership Award, 1987 (Association of Physical Directors).
- Leadership Award for Midwest and Southwest Fields, 1991.
- Representative for Japan/USA YMCA Management Seminars, 1988 and 1992.
- Kankakee, Illinois Citizen of the Year, 1989.
- Serves on numerous Community Boards of Directors.
- Past President of the Kankakee, Illinois Kiwanis Club.

One of his greatest contributions to the National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving program was his religious inspiration. His devotional messages, inspirational talks and religious convictions gave special meaning and direction to the purpose and values of the YMCA. His leadership in this area encouraged the National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee to initiate a Values Education Program.

The greatest gift one can give to humanity is the gift of a constructive, dedicated and creative life. Many have given these gifts to the YMCA Aquatic Program. Wes is one of those people. We are proud to honor Wesley E. Walker as the recipient of the 1993 Joseph G. Rogers Award.

This award was established in 1974 as recognition of long and exceptional leadership, insight, dedication and friendship by a man whose YMCA career has touched and enriched the lives of countless young people. In his lifetime, Joe Rogers was the first recipient of the National Distinguished Service to Aquatics Award. He was the organizer of the National Operating Council on Aquatics, represented the YMCA on the U.S. Olympic Men's Swimming Committee, and was the founder of the National YMCA Women's Swimming and Diving Championships established in 1966.

The Joseph G. Rogers Award statue is permanently located in the International Swimming Hall of Fame Museum, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with each Honoree's name affixed in bronze on the base. A replica of the statue is presented to each Honoree at the YMCA of the USA National Swimming and Diving Championships.

The creator of the statue is Daniel Gluck, whose abstract religious and sports sculptures (including the Brian Piccolo Award) are on view in many public places around the United States. The beautifully sculptured award of bronze and marble stands over four feet in height, weighs nearly 1,000 pounds and has a mounted swimming figure that stretches nearly four feet in length.

