

Thanks for the Memories

I started as a USA Swimming official while my daughter Claire Dohmen was swimming with Springfield Aquatics, and my first session as a stroke and turn trainee was the Halloween Classic. As years passed, I decided to move up in the officiating levels and eventually became a referee, thanks to the guidance of Gary Ledford, Jim Devine and numerous other Missouri Valley Swimming training officials, as well as several officials from LSCs other than Missouri Valley, including Arkansas Swimming officials such as Ed Gbur. I chose to end my career at the same event as the one in which it started, the Halloween Classic.

After Claire entered high school and chose homework and horseback riding over swimming, I continued as an official because I believe that swimming is an excellent sport for its contribution to the fitness of the swimmers and that all swimmers compete in their chosen events in their chosen meets, which is different from many sports with team member limits. When Claire finished USA Swimming, I was teaching night courses at Missouri State University and changed my affiliation from Springfield Aquatics to Missouri State Aquatics .

During the time I officiated, I had the privilege to meet and work with many very fine individuals who shared the same interests in the sport of swimming, saw numerous good young athletes and enjoyed a lot of fine food at hospitality rooms. I even had the opportunity to serve as a stroke and turn judge with Olympic swimmers in my lanes at the Missouri Grand Prix.

My decision to retire from officiating came with short notice, but I wanted to finish my career as it had started. An official at the Springfield Aquatics Halloween Classic.

I offer many thanks to the officials who helped to train me, to the teams that allowed me to officiate in events, to the many officials with whom I have worked and shared the good times, to the coaches who have always been appreciative of my efforts, to the swimmers who have given me the chance to offer some assistance, to the wonderful hospitality coordinators who have fed me well, to the parents who have allowed me to work with their children, to the swimmers who worked hard to be able to swim the events, and particularly to my wife for allowing me the time to do so.

Many, many volunteers make up a swimming program. The swimmers, coaches, officials and observers at swim meets are well served by the behind the scenes workers in who solicit advertizing , work concessions stands, set up the pool and clean up after the meet.

My time as an official has been enjoyable, and will be a cherished memory. **ROCK THE BLOCKS, RULE THE POOL!!** , but first enjoy swimming.

Gary Bockman

Retired USA Swimming Official