

# JIM BROBIN

Inducted 1999

Jim Brobin started coaching in the late 1950's, when both high school and AAU swimming were expanding rapidly. He contributed greatly to that growth, and became one of Minnesota's outstanding coaches despite having less than ideal pool time for many years.

Jim was born and raised in Ely, Minnesota, and during high school swam briefly for Leonard Klun. After high school he attended Ely Jr. College and finished his four-year degree at St. Cloud State.

Jim started his teaching career at Mounds View in 1958. In 1959, Mounds View started a competitive swim program. Jim took the position and tried to learn as much as he could about the sport through reading and attending clinics. This was when high school swimming in Minnesota was growing rapidly and there was an influx of so-called modern ideas. Jim felt that he had an advantage not being encumbered with older outdated theories. This allowed him to grow in sync with the new way. Two people who were a big help to Jim in those early years were Rog Ahlman and Julie Arnquist.

At this time Mounds View did not have a pool and practice time was limited to two forty-five minute practices a week at the Midway YMCA pool. Eventually they were allotted three one-hour practices a week. This went on for eight years.

Jim started a summer team in 1960 that trained in neighboring Turtle Lake, swimming between two docks. This later became the Mounds View Swim Club. Jim coached with the club for fifteen years.

In 1967, Irondale opened a junior high pool that was used by a junior high program, and the Irondale and Mounds View high school teams. As additional pools were built in the district the junior high program expanded and Jim's team had to practice at different pools on different days of the week.

Once regular pool time was available in 1967, Mounds View won the first of many North Suburban Conference championships, and was either first or second in the conference with both the boys and girls teams the rest of Jim's coaching career. In addition, the boys team had a string of eighty-five conference dual meet wins in a row.

In 1974, Mounds View started a girls swim team with Jim as the coach. This was the only sport for girls at Mounds View so it drew the best athletes, and was very strong right from the start.

One of the big contributors to Jim's teams' success was diving coach John Madura. John coached with Jim for many years and consistently had a strong group of divers for both teams.

At the state level, his boys and girls teams were usually near the top with the girls finishing second in 1976, and the boys winning the state meet in 1981 and 1983. Individually there were nineteen state champions with two state records, and more than twenty-five All-American swimmers and divers.

One of the highlights for Jim was the opportunity to coach all four of his children on his teams. Another was sending a special swimmer that he coached to the National Special Olympics in the late 1970's where he won one bronze and two silver medals.

Jim was also active state-wide as a presenter at clinics, as a member of the High School Girls Board of Directors, and as secretary of the Minnesota Swimming Coaches Association for three terms.