

RICH BALLARD

Inducted 2015

Rich Ballard's diving career started in Illinois, went to Wisconsin, and ended in Minnesota. He spent over forty years there serving the sport of diving as a coach, official and administrator.

He grew up in Evanston, Illinois, and by the time he was nine years old he was diving on his own at the local YMCA. Once he got to high school he joined the swimming/diving team and diving became his passion. In high school he competed against many outstanding divers and placed fifth in the state meet his senior year. Rich's coach his junior year was Jerry Darda and his senior year, John Walker. Both became prominent college coaches.

Rich got his first taste of coaching in the summers when he worked, dove, and coached age group divers at local country clubs. He continued this involvement in Rochester, where he taught community education and coached USA Diving for many years.

In 1965, he enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. They had a swimming team but no diving coach. In Rich's junior year, Barry Schockmel was hired to coach diving at UW-La Crosse. Rich decided to return to diving and during his last two years he was conference champion, placed 7th at the NAIA National Meet, and was an Honorable Mention All - American.

In the Fall of 1970, Rich was hired to teach physical education and coach boys diving at John Marshall High School in Rochester, Minnesota. Rich taught there for thirty-four years and coached boys diving for forty-three years. Girls aquatics started in 1973, and he added coaching girls diving to his resumes. Later, when Rochester Century High School opened, Rich coached their girl divers as well as his John Marshall girls. He also coached the Rochester Mayo High School boy divers in years when they were without a coach. Rich continued to coach girls diving until 2004, and retired from boys diving in 2014 after coaching over seventy-four combined boys and girls seasons..

When Rich started coaching at John Marshall, Frank Oman was the diving coach at Mayo. He was a mentor and friend of Rich. Others who had an impact were Dick Kimball, a Rochester native and University of Michigan coach, and John and Tom Madura.

Rich's high school divers were very successful with many boys and girls qualifying for and scoring in the state swimming meet. There was one state champion, Shawn Anderson, in 1982 and numerous second and third place finishers along with many All-Americans.

The divers helped the John Marshall boys team to a State Swim Meet second place finish in 1972. Both boys and girls teams had numerous top-ten state meet places during his coaching years.

Rich has constantly served diving throughout his career and has received seventeen Section Diving Coach of the Year Awards and the MSCA Assistant Coach of the Year Award. He was a State Meet judge from the 1970's until 1997 when he became the State Meet Diving Referee for both boys and girls, along with Tom Madura. On the national level he has served on the NISCA All-America Diving Selection Committee since 1997.