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In Memoriam 2017

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In Memoriam 2017 – Adolph Kiefer, Louise Priest, and Terry Laughlin
Steve Langendorfer

The calendar year 2017 marked the passing of a number of important people including three notable aquatic professionals. I am taking this opportunity at the end of the year to acknowledge three who I will miss personally. I have provided a URL to an obituary and/or tribute after each of my short personal recognitions in case any reader is interested in learning more about each of their accomplishments.

Adolph Kiefer, described once by Frank Deford as “the best swimmer no one has ever heard of,” in fact was quite well-known in aquatic and swimming circles for much of his almost century-long life. At age 17, Adolph was the 100m backstroke Olympic champion at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, setting a record in the event that lasted 20 years. According to a story he loved to retell, because of his first name, Adolph Hitler actually came down to poolside to congratulate him on his victory. In later life, Kiefer enjoyed proclaiming that if he knew then (i.e., in 1936) what he learned later, he would have pulled Hitler into the pool and drowned him on the spot! After being one of the nation’s top competitive swimmers throughout the pre-World War II decade, he founded his own swimming equipment company in the 1950s that he continued to run until late in his long life. Due to his knowledge of swimming, he innovated many currently-common aquatic products such as turbulence-reducing lane lines, starting blocks, and dozens of other swimming and water safety products. One of his later life disappointments was failing to bring the 2016 Olympic Games to his home city of Chicago. Right up to the end of his life, he continued daily swims in his own pool using a self-designed tether after he had difficulty walking.

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/chicagotribune/obituary.aspx?pid=185346570>

Louise Priest, the long-time executive director of the *Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics* (CNCA), was an internationally-known adapted aquatics specialist who was the author/editor of the American Red Cross’ initial *Adapted Aquatics* (1977) text. Louise frequently has been called “the mother of adapted aquatics.” She also showed remarkable foresight about the need for a professionally-oriented non-competitive aquatic journal when she established and served as editor of the *National Aquatics Journal* (NAJ) for 12 volumes in the 1980s-1990s. NAJ essentially was the forerunner of the *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education* (IJARE) by publishing a wide variety of research and professional aquatics papers. I had the good fortune and honor to publish a number of my earliest professional aquatic papers in NAJ. On a very

personal note, Louise was always very supportive of me and other aquatic professionals throughout our careers. When I was a young, inexperienced aquatic professional, she was instrumental in helping introduce me to a broad network of aquatic professional contacts across the U.S. as well as internationally. I forever will feel indebted to Louise and other members of CNCA for their friendship, leadership, and support.

http://www.arnmortuary.com/obitlink?obit_id=2029234

Terry Laughlin was the author of *Total Immersion*, an innovative swimming text that challenged many traditional ways to teach swimming, especially for adults aspiring to be swimmers and triathletes. Terry focused the total immersion process on helping adult learners improve balance, body position, and streamlining by applying principles of hydrodynamics presented in terms very understandable by lay persons. As the founder of Total Immersion, Inc., he produced videos and offered adult swim camps and clubs around the U.S. Many adult swimmers benefitted from his insightful drills and progressions to help them to be more efficient and effective in their swimming. He served as fitness editor of *Swim* magazine and senior editor for *Fitness Swimmer* while contributing a column to *Inside Triathlon*. Terry also was a lifelong swimmer and a particularly dedicated and successful Masters competitive swimmer right up to the end of his life. He continued to compete in Masters the past several years despite battling stage IV cancer.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/27/obituaries/terry-laughlin-dead-taught-swimmers-not-to-struggle-with-total-immersion-method.html>