

Pacific Masters A History



Ann Curtis Cuneo, Steve Clark, the Ladera Oaks Swim Club, George Haines, Donna de Varona, the Redwood Empire Swim League, Sherm Chavoor, Rick DeMont, the Aquabears, Mark Spitz, Art Octavio, Matt Biondi, the NCS Swimming & Diving Championships, Natalie Coughlin...

Since Northern California has had such a long and illustrious history in the world of competitive swimming, it only stands to reason that Pacific Masters Swimming would play a prominent role in the development of United States Masters Swimming (USMS).

The Genesis of an Idea

It's doubtful that when **Ransom J. Arthur** and **John R. Spannuth** first started kicking around the idea of an adult swimming organization back in the late 1960's either of them could have envisioned what has become today's USMS.

Arthur, a physician, researcher and Captain with the U.S. Navy, and Spannuth, President of the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA), were passionate about competitive swimming. They believed in the long-term health benefits associated with the sport and they were convinced that swimming could and should be a lifetime pursuit.

It's not difficult to imagine the hurdles that the two men faced. Conventional wisdom at the time held that strenuous exercise could be harmful to adults. Forty percent of Americans 18 years and older smoked cigarettes. And since the vast majority of U.S. Olympic Team swimmers were teenagers, competitive swimming was looked upon as a young person's game.

But America was in the early stages of a fitness boom. *The Jack LaLanne Show* was in the midst of a lengthy run on network television; Dr. Kenneth H. Cooper preached the benefits of regular aerobic/cardiovascular exercise and Bill Bowerman, who would later go on to create Nike, espoused the spiritual and physiological value of running in his best-selling book, *Jogging*.

The timing was right to launch a swimming revolution and Arthur, whose ties to Northern California included a brief swimming career at the University of California, Berkeley, was just the man to spark it.

"The vision at the beginning was to afford adults the opportunity to compete," says **Nancy Ridout**, former USMS President and longtime Registrar for Pacific Masters.

It made no sense to Arthur and Spannuth that countless former competitive swimmers who'd spent years developing a skillset didn't have an outlet for it once they graduated from high school or college.

The recipe was simple: make the world a happier and healthier place by creating a program geared for adults that would get them back in the water and keep them there.



Zada and Ray Taft show their joy of swimming that became a core value they implanted in Pacific Masters. Whether competing at the highest level, teaching adults and children to swim at their school, or encouraging excellence, they helped set the standard of Masters swimming as a sport that welcomes the participation of adult athletes of all abilities.



Nancy Ridout (top) shown here at her first Masters Nationals in 1973, Santa Monica, CA. In 1982 she became Pacific Masters Registrar, a post she held through 2013.



Capt. Ransom J. Arthur (right) with **Richard Rahe** at 1971 Short Course Nationals in Amarillo, TX. A physician by training, Arthur believed that regular exercise for adults would result in long term health benefits.



John Spannuth was the President of the American Association of Swim Coaches (ASCA) in the late 1960s when he worked with Ransom Arthur to start a swimming program for adults. He continues to promote the benefits of an active exercise program throughout life and is currently President of the United States Water Fitness Association.

Earning Legitimacy

When Spannuth hosted the first ever National Masters Swimming Championships in his hometown of Amarillo, Texas in 1970, the response was tepid. The event, which featured three age groups—25-34, 35-44 and 45 & older—drew a paltry 46 athletes from 11 teams.



The Amateur Athletic Union was the governing body of most amateur sports up until the late 1970s and the first body to officially recognize Masters swimming. The Amateur Sports Act of 1978 gave those sports the right and opportunity to govern themselves leading to the formation of National Governing Bodies for many sports, including United States Masters Swimming.



*Top 3 finishing teams for the men's 35+ 200 free relay at the 1973 Masters Nationals. **Barry Fasbender**, seated in the middle, Pacific's longtime Chair of Meet Operations received the Ransom Arthur Award in 2008 in recognition of his service at the local and national level.*

The only team from Northern California at those inaugural championships was Walnut Creek Park & Recreation Department, and the lone representative was **Mike Milliman**, ASCA's Executive Secretary at the time.

"I was in contact with Spannuth and Arthur for about two or three years before that meet ever came to fruition," recalls Milliman. "When John said, 'We're gonna have this meet and we're gonna do it at Phillips 66 in Texas,' I said, 'I'm coming!'"

Milliman not only captured titles in the 100 Back, 100 Fly and 100 I.M., but he also earned the high point award in the Men's 35-44 division. "That meet was the kernel that got everything started," says Milliman.

In the beginning, it was all about raising awareness and earning legitimacy and the sport received both when Swimming World magazine devoted a page and a half to recapping the event.

One of Arthur and Spannuth's first objectives was to enroll the Amateur Athletic Association, the governing body of competitive swimming, in the idea that adult swimming should become an official AAU program.

"They spearheaded this being part of a recognized, organized body so that they would have some credibility," says Ridout.

If the AAU wasn't exactly bowled over by the two men's proposal, it's easy to understand why. Forty-six participants, after all, does not a statement make.

But swimmers are a determined bunch. It's in their nature to be persistent and patient. While the AAU deliberated whether or not to jump on board, Arthur and Spannuth continued to push ahead with the Masters agenda. They staged a second National Championships in Amarillo in 1971 and managed to bump up the numbers to 160 athletes and 32 teams.

Arthur and Spannuth talked up the new sport at every opportunity. Early on, they enlisted retired elite swimmers to compete in the hopes that their participation would attract others to follow suit. They even coaxed Hollywood heavyweight **Buster Crabbe** into becoming the first National Masters PR Chairperson. Crabbe, a gold medalist at the 1932 Olympic Games who would go on to become a household name by playing Tarzan and Flash Gordon, gave Masters swimming validation—a kind of rugged sex appeal.

However Arthur and Spannuth managed to pull it off, they succeeded in hooking the AAU and masters swimming became an official part of the union in October of 1971.



***Buster Crabbe** (left), a gold medalist at the 1932 Olympics and former movie star was enlisted to add star power to early Masters competitions. **Bob Beach** (center) was instrumental overcoming the AAU's resistance to the inclusion of Masters swimming as a recognized sport. He received the Ransom Arthur Award in 1986. **Ransom Arthur** (on right)*



***Nancy Ridout** (right), USMS President, presents the Ransom Arthur Award to **Joan and Richard Smith** (left) in 2000. Joan's and Richard's service ranged from managing Pacific Masters finances, to serving as officers on the Board of Directors, officiating at meets, contributing to the early Pacific Masters newsletters, and the enormous job of proofing the Pacific Masters Top Ten listings.*

A Movement Takes Hold in the Bay Area

When a triumphant Milliman returned to the Bay Area from the first Masters Nationals, he decided to stage his own meet a month later, in June of 1970. The totality of his marketing plan consisted of sending invitations to all the age group teams in the Pacific Association because he figured that most of the kids had parents who were former swimmers. "I put it on in Larkey Park in Walnut Creek," says Milliman. "It was not sanctioned by anybody or anything. We just did it."

Milliman's meet, the first ever Masters competition staged in the Bay Area, actually drew more swimmers than Spannuth's inaugural Nationals.

"We probably had about 60 people there," he says. "Somebody was already tabulating results at that time because it came out later that we'd broken 32 national records or something like that at the meet. Just about everyone who swam a race and won got a record. It was like that in the beginning."

One of the participants and record breakers at the Larkey Park meet was **Ray Taft**. Ray and his wife, **Zada**, were instrumental in planting the seeds of what is now the largest Local Masters Swimming Committee (LMSC) in the country. It was the Tafts, founders of the Taft Swim School in the mid-1950's, who started the San Mateo Master Marlins in 1971. The Marlins would later become the first officially registered Pacific Masters club.

The record books are awash with Ray and Zada's in-water exploits, but it is their efforts out of the pool that endeared them to the Bay Area swimming community and helped put the sport on the map.

"The Tafts were very fundamental to the whole thing," recalls Verne Scott, who began his tenure as Pacific Masters' first chairperson in 1979. "They took a real interest in [Pacific Masters] and they were very supportive."

Dick Lewis, a lifelong swimmer at 84, recalls that prior to the formation of masters swimming it was difficult to even find water time. "When I came back from the army, there was no swimming available," he says. "The pools didn't have lanes in them and they didn't allow lap swimming."

When Lewis, a teacher and coach at nearby Mills High School, caught wind of what the Tafts were up to with the Marlins, he jumped at the opportunity to get back into organized swim training. "I found out that there was a program going on in San Mateo," says Lewis. "I went down and started swimming with them after a 20 year layoff."

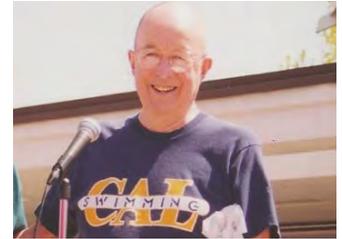
Lewis credits the Tafts' enthusiasm for not only drawing adults back into the pool, but for also making certain that the social side of the sport was just as important as the competitive side. He laughs when he recalls that the first thing everyone did after a lightly-attended, early era meet in Livermore, for example, was gather in the parking lot and tap a keg of beer.



Verne Scott served as Pacific Masters Chairman in the 80s. His vision and leadership created the foundation of today's Pacific Masters. His legacy continues as Pacific has the largest concentration of Masters swimmers in the world. Verne established the Pacific Masters Office which subsequently has proved instrumental in our success and campaigned for inclusiveness of all ages, especially those who wanted to swim but were younger than the 25 years old rule at the time. Pacific Masters recognized and included these younger swimmers in its program and his voice prevailed when a new age group 19-24 was also adopted by USMS.



Larkey Pool in Walnut Creek was the site of the first Pacific Masters competition. Shallow, with 6 narrow lanes, it pales in comparison to the competitive facilities in use today.



George Cunningham was instrumental in shaping Pacific Masters. He was an incredible ambassador for our sport, encouraged and provided our first audits, served on the Board of Directors, and created the Peggy Luchessi Award in memory of his sister who died while participating in a meet, presented annually to a Pacific Masters swimmer who brought joy to Masters swimming.



Peter Guadagni (left) Pacific Masters Chair 2012-2015 with **Dick Lewis** (right). Peter swam on Dick's high school swim team when Dick started his Masters career with the Tafts. As a 10 year old youth swimmer, Peter's first coaches were Ray and Zada Taft.

In 1972, the Tafts brought the National AAU Masters Short Course Championships to Northern California and 325 swimmers showed up to race in San Mateo. Five year divisions were implemented for the first time, starting with the 25-29 age group, and 69-year-old **Bill Trask** from Montclair Swim Club in Oakland became the oldest swimmer to date to compete at a Masters nationals.

The official results from that meet show that a 51-year-old swimmer by the name of **James “Doc” Councilman**, whose Indiana Hoosiers were at the top of the collegiate swimming world, was disqualified in the 200 yard breaststroke—which goes to show that while, yes, Masters swimming may have emphasized social interaction and friendly competition, it was far from being an environment where anything went.



Ray and Zada Taft (left and second from left) established the San Mateo Master Marlins in 1971. In 1973, **Carol Macpherson** (second from right) and **Cindy Baxter** (right) started the Rinconada Masters. The Tafts and Cindy Baxter were Ransom Arthur Award winners in 1979 and 1981 respectively.



Dave Gray was a pivotal contributor to Pacific Masters. During his tenure as Chairman, Pacific Masters became incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, encompassed open water swimming as an integral part of the program and wrote the rules and guidelines governing OW swimming that were the basis of those eventually adopted by USMS, streamlined meet operations, witnessed tremendous growth and built a hefty financial surplus, and championed inclusion of the youngest age group 19-24.

It Takes a Village (of Swimmers)

The Tafts were certainly not alone in nurturing the fledgling Masters community in Northern California. Another early team was Rinconada Masters (originally Fremont Hills Swim Team). Founded in 1973 by **Carol Macpherson** and **Cindy Baxter**, the team initially attracted less than two-dozen members. Thanks to Macpherson and Baxter’s bottomless energy and passion, though, interest quickly swelled.

Rinconada, as was the case with all new Masters programs, initially took whatever lane space they could find at the community pool and built from there. “When we started, we asked for three lanes for Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings,” says Macpherson.

One of Arthur and Spannuth’s principal tenets for keeping the growing population of adult swimmers engaged was to create tangible incentives. Staging local, regional and national competitions, offering race awards through eight places, establishing individual and team scoring systems, maintaining a detailed system that would recognize records, Top Ten rankings and All American honors—all of these features of USMS can be traced directly back to this philosophy.

And from the beginning, Baxter and Macpherson ascribed to this belief. “We started in January and in April there was the Masters Nationals down in Santa Monica,” recalls Macpherson. “We took about fifteen swimmers with us.”

San Mateo and Rinconada dominated Southern California’s first championship meet, with San Mateo winning its second consecutive team title. The ensuing newspaper accounts of the two teams’ exploits helped the sport gain even more traction. Macpherson, who as an age grouper trained under **Haines** at the Santa Clara Swim Club, approached her old coach with the idea of hosting a Masters Nationals. Haines readily agreed.



Verne and Dorothy Scott were instrumental in the development of both Pacific Masters and Davis Aquatic Masters. Although located in a college town away from the Bay Area, Davis grew to be USMS’ largest club. Davis was selected as the 2011 USMS Local Club of the Year.



The success of Pacific Masters has resulted from the development of many strong clubs lead by outstanding coaches such as **Mo Chambers** (above). A former youth swimmer from upstate New York, Mo worked with the City of Mountain View to start what would become the Mountain View Masters. The club would eventually become one of Pacific Masters largest. Mo received the USMS Coach of the Year Award in 1996.



*The first triathlete to win international fame, **Dave Scott** (Verne and Dorothy's son) was Davis' first coach. Dave's sister Patti Scott-Baier is the longtime coach of the highly successful Tuolumne County Aquatic Masters.*



***Mike Collins** was selected as the youngest United States Masters Swimming Coach of the Year in 1990 at the age of 22. He was the Head Coach at Davis Aquatic Masters, the largest single Masters program in the country, from 1989-1997. Collins was an assistant coach at the University of California Davis Men's Team from 1990-94. In his first year UC Davis placed 5th at the Division II NCAA's. In 1992 the team moved up to 4th place. In 1993 Davis qualified a record 18 swimmers for nationals, and moved up to third.*

Rinconada, in conjunction with San Mateo and De Anza, which had formed a Masters club under **Jerry Koch**, staged the 1974 Long Course Swimming Championships at the world famous Santa Clara International Swim Center. Rinconada and San Mateo again ruled the team standings, this time with Rinconada coming out on top.

"We had 90 swimmers at that time," says Macpherson. "I called up a lot of the swimmers I swam with at Santa Clara and got them all out swimming and training."

Lewis, for one, was astonished by how quickly the sport was catching on. "The thing just grew," he says. "It grew like crazy."

"It grew and grew and grew by leaps and bounds," says Macpherson, whose team has gone on to play host to dozens of competitions since its inception.

Programs big and small began to flourish throughout the Bay Area. Over time, the emphasis on Masters swimming gradually shifted from competition to fitness as more and more swimmers joining the program began to place a higher premium on the organized workouts and swim practice camaraderie than the actual racing.

Davis Aquatic Masters was established in March of 1974 with just eleven swimmers. Scott's son, **Dave Scott**, who would later become one of the most accomplished Ironman triathletes in history, took over the reins as DAM's first coach. The **Scotts**, including Verne's wife, **Dorothy**, helped lay the foundation of a team which today boasts a membership of over 500, one of the largest masters programs in the country.

In the East Bay, Walnut Creek Masters, established in 1976 and nurtured by coaching legend **Kerry O'Brien**, has grown to include a membership of over 400.

USMS — A League of Its Own

When the AAU welcomed Masters swimming into its fold, the AAU had a stranglehold on the governance of all Olympics-related sports. During the 1970's, however, that authority began to erode under intense scrutiny. When President Carter signed off on the landmark Amateur Sports Act of 1978, the move was a game changer because it set the stage for the formation of sport-specific national governing bodies such as United States Swimming, the precursor of USA Swimming.

"I was there when the AAU fell apart," says Scott, who was struck by how dysfunctional the organization had become. "I went down to San Francisco several times in 1977 and 1978 to AAU meetings, and by and large they were a waste of time."

From the outside looking in, it seemed a foregone conclusion that USS would join forces with the burgeoning AAU Masters program under the umbrella of the new United States Aquatic Sports entity. But that turned out to be anything but the case.



***Kerry O'Brien's** many efforts on behalf of Masters swimming and the success of his Walnut Creek Masters Club led USMS to recognize his legendary status by renaming its grass roots coaching award in his honor. He was also honored by USMS as its second recipient of the USMS Coach of the Year Award in 1987.*



***Carolyn Boak** receives the 2001 Ransom Arthur Award from USMS President **Nancy Ridout**. Carolyn contributed knowledgeably and tirelessly for Pacific Masters. She helped to write the Guide to Operations, directed many meets, and managed her club. Carolyn was the Meet Director of the largest USMS National Championships, held at Stanford University in 1987.*



For many years, for many members, **Nancy Ridout** was Pacific Masters. From 1982 through 2013 Nancy registered every Pacific member, ranked every Top 10 performance and recorded every record. In recognition of her service, Pacific Masters renamed its Distinguished Service Award in her honor.



Although Pacific Masters boasts a strong competitive program, most members, competitive or not, swim to keep healthy and fit. The camaraderie and support of lane mates is paramount to their experience.

“They wanted nothing to do with Masters,” says Ridout. Even though Masters swimming had by then become an unstoppable force, Ridout recalls that the overriding sentiment at USS was that those pushing the Masters swimming agenda “were nothing more than a bunch of old [fogeys] trying to relive their youth.”

The choice, she explains, was for Masters to either stay with the crumbling AAU or to incorporate. “We incorporated and USA Swimming has lived to regret its decision,” says Ridout, whose tenure as USMS President ran from 1997 to 2001.

“At the time we were kind of flying blind,” says Macpherson. “We were just trying to keep the committee together and keep people getting their membership cards, making sure we had insurance... It was that type of thing.”

Scott used what he had learned in forming DAM as a blueprint for Pacific Masters. He, Ridout, Cindy Baxter, Carol McPherson and **Dore Schwab** were determined to avoid creating an AAU-type entity.

“It started more at the grass roots level,” says Scott. “We decided to take the initiative and try to develop Pacific Masters in a manner that reflected our past experiences with the AAU in the hope that Pacific Masters would not be quite so bureaucratic and nonrepresentative. We spent quite a bit of time developing the general criteria for membership and a whole list of other things.”

Pacific Masters Sets the Pace

From its inception in 1971, Pacific Masters was founded on the spirit of inclusiveness and cooperation. According to Scott, Pacific Masters has managed to retain its identity, and to a large degree its autonomy, precisely because the organization was successful in getting its own rules in place before it even became part of USMS.

“I think there was a down-home, folksy approach that permeated through most of [Pacific Masters],” says Scott. “We were more flexible out here and we were more encouraging to beginning swimmers. We were more interested in providing an atmosphere that was more fun than competitive.”

When DAM volunteered to host the first Pacific Masters Championships in June of 1977, over 300 swimmers participated and the ambiance reflected the type of vision Scott, Ridout and the others strove for.

“We made quite an effort to provide meals and a friendly atmosphere,” says Scott. “We also helped with housing and things like that. Davis really made an effort to provide hospitality and to



Dore Schwab was another remarkable and effective ambassador for Pacific Masters and for our sport. He served as Pacific Masters Chairman, At-Large Board member, Marketing Chair, and was on the ground floor of organizing and administering Pacific Masters beginning in 1972.



Pacific Masters 2001 Ransom Arthur Award presented to Carolyn Boak with former Pacific Masters winners. From left - **Joan Smith & Richard Smith** (2000), **Nancy Ridout**, USMS President (1994), **Carolyn Boak** (2001), **Tom Boak** (1991), **Cindy Baxter** (1981).



Adult open water swimming competition was largely created and continuously enhanced by Pacific Masters. It has become an immensely popular component of our program. Although there is stiff competition for the top places many participants take just pride in completing open water swims of 1 to 10 kilometers.



While the concept of competition for adults was originally controversial, Pacific Masters sanctions 12 to 20 pool meets each year with participants from 18 to over 90.

make it a fun event.”

Scott’s tenure as chairperson also coincided with Pacific Masters inaugural open water competition, when DAM introduced the Lake Berryessa Swim on June 6, 1982. Over 400 swimmers attended, and the event continues to be one of the crown jewels in Pacific Masters annual open water schedule.

“I found over the years when I was involved with Pacific Masters that there was a great willingness of people,” says Scott. “If you told them what you thought needed to be done, they’d do it.”

By the time of USMS’s incorporation in 1981, Ransom Arthur’s idea of an adult swimming program had become a world-wide phenomenon. Enrollment sailed past the 11,000 mark and that summer’s nationals in Irvine, California drew 1,209 swimmers from 128 teams, one-third of whom traveled to the meet from outside the U.S.

The numbers in Northern California continued to trend upward as well. “In 1982 we had 1,606 swimmers registered with Pacific Masters,” says Ridout. “We went from 1,600 to 2,000 to 2,300 to 3,100... It just kept growing after that.”

At the end of 2013, Pacific Masters had a whopping 11,259 registered swimmers, well more than twice as many as the next largest LMSC.

But Pacific Masters weighty contributions to the success of USMS over the years have always gone far beyond mere enrollment numbers. In the pool, Pacific Masters swimmers have established thousands of National and World records and have earned countless Top Ten rankings. Out of the pool, a number of Pacific Masters members have served on the USMS board of directors and have acted as officers, committee chairs and convention delegates for the organization. These passionate individuals have helped shape Masters swimming’s vision and direction not just in the United States but around the globe.

It only made sense that Pacific Masters, long the trendsetter for USMS, would play host to the 11th FINA World Masters Championships in the summer of 2006, the first ever to be staged in California. The event, which drew 5,535 swimmers and 1,789 divers, synchronized swimmers, water polo players and open water swimmers from over 60 countries, was the culmination of years of hard work and logistical planning headed by Pacific Masters administrative volunteers.

Milliman, who swam at the meet, couldn’t help but shake his head in amazement at the transformation he had witnessed since his first trip to the little meet in Amarillo 36 years before.

“Wow,” he says, laughing at the memory. “And to think that we started the whole thing, here in the United States.”



Michael Moore (left) was Chair of the Organizing Committee for the 2006 FINA Masters World Championships at Stanford. 2008 Ransom Arthur Award Winner Barry Fasbender (3rd from right) was director of the event’s swim competition.



Michael Moore (left) presenting FINA flag to representative from Perth, site of the next (2008) FINA Masters Championships. Michael is a key figure in the growth of Pacific Masters. He has held multiple leadership positions including Chairman from 2002 to 2011. Michael has been the Pacific Masters Web Master since he created the web site in 1995; he also created and published Pacific’s emailed newsletter, the Update, for 14 years. For over 2 decades he has officiated Pacific Masters meets. Michael’s service extends to USMS where he has served on many committees and been a member of its Board of Directors.

A Culture of Involvement



Scott Williams, an inspirational coach at several Pacific Masters Clubs, received the USMS Coach of the Year Award in 2004.



For more than two decades **Laura Val** has established a record of excellence in pool and open water competition unequaled in our sport. Owing most world records, sprints through distance, in every age group in which she competes, Laura is primarily challenged by competitors who are much younger.



With 11,259 members at the end of 2013, Pacific Masters is larger than the next 3 largest USMS local organizations combined.

Pacific Masters has long been the result of an equal measure of talent and sacrifice. Since its inception, the organization has thrived in large part because of the contributions of many.

“We value our clubs and our swimmers,” says Ridout. “Our goal is to make it possible for them to do what they want to do. We’re bottom up, rather than top down. The history of Pacific Masters has always been one of cooperation.”

It’s also been a culture of involvement. “Everyone is included in the decision making, if they want to be,” says Ridout.

The roster of those talented individuals who have answered the call to duty over the years at Pacific Masters is too lengthy to enumerate in full.

Scott, who served as Pacific Masters chairperson for several years, later became vice president of USMS in 1984.

Ray Taft was a fixture on the Pacific Masters Committee from 1972 to 1985, and in 1978 he and Zada, thanks to their weighty contributions to the sport of Masters swimming, received USMS’s highest honor, The Capt. Ransom J. Arthur M.D. Award. Six other Pacific Masters individuals—**Baxter, Ridout, Richard and Joan Smith, Carolyn Boak and Barry Fasbender**—have since gone on to win the prestigious honor.

In 1987, Walnut Creek’s Kerry O’Brien became the first coach from Pacific Masters to win USMS’s Coach of Year Award. Four others—Mountain View’s **Mo Chambers**, DAM’s **Michael Collins**, The Olympic Club’s **Scott Williams** and DAM’s **Stuart Kahn**—have also won that honor.

In 2008, the U.S. Masters Swimming Kerry O’Brien Coaching Award was established to honor O’Brien’s lifelong passion and dedication to his sport. A number of coaches from Pacific Masters have earned the award, which recognizes individuals who are working hard to spread the gospel of masters swimming. Most importantly, Northern California’s love affair of Masters swimming shows no signs of abating.

“I think it’s going to continue to grow,” says Macpherson. “It just keeps you healthy. We all know that—those of us who swim a lot.”

“For a long time, I was worried that all the work many of us had done over the years was maybe not going to last because everyone was getting older and there weren’t too many younger people who were coming to the convention or getting involved in a significant way,” says Ridout. “People just don’t have time anymore. But that’s changing too, so I’m really happy about that.”

Article by Tito Morales. Layout, photo selection and captions by Rich Burns, Peter Guadagni and Nancy Ridout.



Coming to Masters after a long career coaching age group and college teams, Coach **Stu Kahn** assumed the head coaching position at Davis Aquatic Masters in 2008 reinvigorating the existing program. In 2012, Stu became the most recent Pacific Masters coach to win the USMS Coach of the Year Award. This list includes **Kerry O’Brien**, WCM (1987), **Michael Collins**, DAM (1990), **Mo Chambers**, MVM (1996), **Scott Williams**, TOC (2004), and **Stu Kahn**, DAM, (2012). (Photo by Peter H. Bick)



Matt Biondi, 2013 keynote speaker. The Annual Meeting Celebration was an idea proposed in 2011. It was enthusiastically adopted as a way to encourage more members to participate in administering the organization’s activities. It offers a day devoted to in the water swimming, education through seminars and presentations, inspiration by high profile keynote speakers such as **Rowdy Gaines** (2011), **Janet Evans** (2012), and **Matt Biondi** (2013), lunch, and the Pac Masters year in review and election of officers.