

INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES THE CLASS OF 2016

FORT LAUDERDALE - The International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF), recognized by FINA, the international governing body for the Olympic aquatic sports, has announced the names of 16 athletes, coaches, contributors, pioneers and one team - representing six aquatic disciplines (swimming, open water swimming, marathon swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo) from eleven different nations, who will be honored during ISHOF's 52nd Annual Honors Weekend, June 3-5, 2016, in Santa Clara, California.

“This is an exceptional class of honorees,” said Camillo Cametti, of Verona, Italy, Chairman of ISHOF's International Selection Committee, “and one of the largest classes in recent years. It will also mark the first time in ISHOF's history that we will recognize an entire team in the sport of water polo, but what a team - the three time Olympic champions from Hungary. This class also includes many stars well known in their own countries and around the world, and five pioneers, who have long been overlooked for their accomplishments.”

“This is truly a great class and I want to personally congratulate all Honorees and thank Mr. Cametti and the selection committee for their commitment to honor the best in our sports,” said Donna de Varona, ISHOF's Chairman of the Board. “We recognize that this was a difficult task, particularly this year, as the committee started with over 175 nominees from all over the world and many exceptional candidates did not make the final list.”

The ISHOF Class of 2016 includes Swimmers **Aaron Peirsol (USA)**, **Camille Muffat (FRA)** and **Dara Torres (USA)**; Open Water Swimmer **Larisa Ilchenko (RUS)**; Divers **Dmitry Sautin (RUS)** and **Guo Jingjing (CHN)**; Synchronized Swimmer **Yelena Azarova (RUS)**; Water Polo Players: **Seven members of the 2000-2008 Hungarian Olympic water polo team (HUN)**; Marathon Swimmers **Desmond Robert “Des” Renford (AUS)** and **Monique Wildschut (NED)**; Swimming Coach **Bob Bowman (USA)**; Contributor **Sir Peter Heatly (GBR)**; Pioneers **Simeon Boychenko (RUS)**, **Horst Gortitz (GRD/ITA/FRG)**, **Frank Gorman (USA)**, **Hilda James (GBR)** and **Leonid Meshkov (RUS)**.

About the ISHOF

The International Swimming Hall of Fame & Museum was established in 1965 as a not-for-profit educational organization in the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida and was recognized by FINA in 1968. The mission of ISHOF is to **PRESERVE** and **CELEBRATE** aquatic history, to **EDUCATE** the general public about the importance of swimming as the key to water safety, drowning prevention, better health, a better quality of life, and to **INSPIRE** everyone to swim. ISHOF's collection of swimming memorabilia, art, photos and films, along with archival documents and rare books in the Henning Library, make ISHOF the premier repository and academic research resource for swimming and aquatic history in the world.

The International Swimming Hall of Fame's Class of 2016

Swimmers:

LARISA ILCHENKO (RUS)

Russian long distance swimmer, Larisa Ilchenko has won eight World Championships and gold at the 2008 Olympic Games at age 19. She has dominated long distance swimming since her first World Championship in Dubai in 2004, where, aged just 16, she won by over 30 seconds. She won the gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in the 10 km, using her trademark closing kick after being behind the leaders for 9,900 of the 10,000 swim.

AARON PEIRSOL (USA)

Aaron Peirsol is one of the greatest backstrokers in swimming and Olympic history. He participated in three Olympic Games (2000, 2004 and 2008), winning five gold and two silver medals and still holds three long course world records - as part of the USA's 4 x 100 meter medley relay, and in the 100 and 200 meter backstroke events. During his career, he won a total of 36 medals in major international competitions, 29 gold, six silver and one bronze. He retired in 2011 saying, "I ended up doing everything I set out to do."

CAMILLE MUFFAT (FRA)

Camille Muffat was a three time Olympic medalist from the Olympic Nice Natation Club. She specialized in the IM and freestyle events and her career expanded from 2005 to 2014. At the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, she won gold in the 400 meter freestyle, silver in the 200 meter freestyle and bronze in the 4x200 meter freestyle relay. In doing so, she became only the fourth French swimmer to win three Olympic medals at a single edition of the Olympic Games. Camille Muffat's brilliant career was tragically cut short on March 9, 2015 when she was killed in a helicopter crash during the filming of a French TV Reality show, and will be enshrined posthumously.

DARA TORRES (USA)

Dara Torres won her first US National title at the age of 14 and her last at the age of 42, proving *Age is Just a Number* (which also happens to be the title of one of her best selling books). She is the first and only swimmer to ever represent the United States in five Olympic Games (1984, 1988, 1992, 2000, 2008), during an Olympic career that spanned an incredible 24 years. She won a medal in each of her Olympic appearances and has twelve Olympic medals overall (four gold, four silver and four bronze).

Divers

DMITRY SAUTIN (RUS)

Competing in five Olympic Games, Dmitry Sautin has won medals in all four men's diving events and more medals than any other diver in history (two gold, two silver and four bronze). He started diving at age seven, but his diving career almost ended in 1991 when he was stabbed multiple times in an attack. After spending two months in the hospital he represented Russia in

the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, where he won a bronze medal in the three meter springboard event. In 1996, he won gold in the men's 10 meter platform and in 2000, gold and silver medals in both synchronized events.

GUO JINGJING (CHN)

Guo Jingjing, known in China as the “Princess of Diving,” began diving for the Chinese national team in 1992 and competed at her first Olympic Games in 1996. At the 2000 Olympic Games she won two silver medals, the individual and synchronized events in the three meter springboard. In 2004 and 2008 she was perfect, winning two individual titles and teaming with partner Wu Minxia to win gold in the synchronized event, all in the springboard. Her six medals made her the most decorated female Olympic diver in history.

Synchronized Swimmer:

YELENA AZAROVA (RUS)

Yelena Azarova, at the tender age of 14, was the first Russian synchronized swimmer to win solo and duet titles at the European Juniors. Always strong technically, she was one of the original members of the Russian team that won its first gold medal at the World Cup in 1997, its first Championship in 1998 and its first two Olympic team titles in 2000 and 2004. She eventually established her own synchronized swimming club in Moscow.

Water Polo Players:

TEAM HUNGARY 2000-2008

During a ten year period, from 1998 to 2008 the Hungarian men's water polo team built a dynasty unmatched in modern FINA history. Of the twenty players who won gold medals at the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympics, this team will be represented by Tamas Molnar, Tamas Kasas, Tibor Benedek, Gergely Kiss, Peter Biros, Zoltan Szecsi and coach Denes Kemeny (already a member of the Hall of Fame). Team Hungary will be honored as three-time Olympic Champions and the greatest team in water polo history.

Marathon Swimmers:

MONIQUE WILDSCHUT (NED)

Monique Wildschut, a tall and powerful swimmer from the Netherlands, was the six-time World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation champion from 1983 to 1988. In 1983 she was the overall winner of the Atlantic City Marathon and was second overall in the 64 km Traversée Internationale du Lac St-Jean in Canada. As a solo swimmer, she crossed the English Channel twice and had the fastest swim of the year in 1984.

DESMOND ROBERT RENFORD (AUS)

Desmond Robert “Des” Renford, M.B.E., was born in Australia on the 52nd anniversary of the very first Channel swim, achieved in 1875 by Matthew Webb. He took up marathon swimming only at the age of 39 and from 1975 to part of 1980, he crossed the English Channel 19 times in 19 attempts and wore the title King of the Channel, which is accorded the swimmer with the most crossings. For his exploits in the Channel, he was awarded the MBE, Order of the British Empire. Australians remember their Channel swimming sporting legend, who died in 1999, through

the Des Renford Aquatic and Leisure Center in Marouba, a suburb of Sydney. He will be enshrined posthumously.

Coach:

BOB BOWMAN

Bob Bowman is probably best known as the long-time coach of Michael Phelps, however, he has done much more than that. He has been the assistant coach of the USA swim team for three Olympic Games (2004, 2008, 2012) and has just been named the Head Men's Coach for the 2016 USA Olympic Team. He has been a three-time World Championship Head Coach (2007, 2009, 2013) and four time Assistant World Championship Coach (2001, 2003, 2005, 2011). Bob is an ASCA Hall of Fame Inductee, a five-time ASCA Coach of the Year, and the most honored Coach in the 40+ years of the award. He is a six-time USA Swimming Coach of the Year, four-time USA Swimming Foundation's Golden Google Award Recipient and the 2002 USA Swimming Developmental Coach of the Year.

Contributor:

SIR PETER HEATLY (GBR)

Throughout a period of 27 years, Sir Peter Heatly has contributed to the sport of swimming and diving at the local, national and international levels as competitor, team manager, official and administrator. He was a member of both the FINA and LEN Diving committees from 1966 to 1988, Honorary Secretary of the FINA Committee from 1972 to 1984 and Chairman from 1984 to 1988. He was Chairman of Great Britain's Swimming Federation in 1981 and again in 1992. In 1990, he was installed as a Knight of the Realm by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Sir Peter Heatly will be enshrined posthumously.

Pioneers:

SIMEON BOYCHENKO (RUS)

A legendary figure in early Soviet era swimming, Simeon Boychenko was the fastest breaststroke-butterfly swimmer in the world, but because the USSR was not a member of FINA, Boychenko did not get to compete in the Olympic Games. However, at the third International Worker's Olympics in Antwerp (Belgium) in 1937, he considerably outstripped the winners times from the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin in the 200 meter breaststroke, earning the first victory of Soviet swimming on the international level. His lifetime best of 1:05.4 and 2:29.8 in the 100 and 200 meter breast-butterfly would not be touched until after the rules changed permitting butterfly in the mid 1950's. Boychenko will be honored posthumously.

HORST GORLITZ (GDR, ITA, FRG)

Horst Gorlitz began coaching in the German Democratic Republic and after he could no longer agree with the policies of sport in his country, he escaped the GDR in 1955. He became the National Team Coach of Italy in the sport of diving in 1957. In 1964, he coached Hall of Famer Klaus Dibiasi to Olympic gold on the platform and during the next three Olympic Games, Mexico City, Montreal and Moscow, Dibiasi and Giorgio Cagnotto won two gold, four silver

and two bronze medals between them. In 1969, Gorlitz went back to the Federal Republic of Germany to once again coach back in his homeland. He also coached divers in Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Finland and South Africa, and is credited with creating the foam rubber mattress used to create a soft, dry landing for a sitting, standing or back position. Gorlitz will be honored posthumously.

FRANK GORMAN (USA)

Frank competed in an era when there was only one chance in four years to be seen internationally and when male divers from the United States dominated the sport. Diving for Hall of Fame Coach, Dick Smith, Frank just missed the 1960 Olympic Team for the United States, but returned four years later to win the United States Olympic Trials and then the silver medal in the 3 meter springboard at the Tokyo Olympics. While at the Tokyo Games, he outscored everyone on nine out of ten dives, but missed one badly to take second place. Competing at Harvard University, he never lost a dual meet and was an All-American Diver for all four years, 1957-1960.

HILDA JAMES (GBR)

Hilda James is credited with introducing the six beat crawl stroke to England, a measure which made swimmers much faster. Nicknamed the “English Comet” she held every British freestyle record, 100 yards to the mile. She became a darling of the press and was expected to win three gold medals, all in the freestyle at the 1924 Olympic Games. Unfortunately, living in the Victorian era, Hilda’s parents controversially prevented her from competing in the Games. After her swimming career, Hilda spent much of her time coaching and giving demonstrations. James will be honored posthumously.

LEONID MESHKOV (RUS)

Like Simeon Boychenko, Leonid Meshkov is a legendary figure in Russian swimming history who also broke the recognized world record in the 100 meter butterfly-breaststroke, and European records in the 200 and 400 meters freestyle, prior to the outbreak of WWII. And like Boychenko, his accomplishments were not recognized. During the defense of Stalingrad, he earned hero status, but also sustained severe injuries to his shoulder and arm that were thought to end all hopes of resuming swimming. However, after demanding rehabilitation that lasted many years, he became the first Soviet swimmer to claim a FINA recognized world record, when he swam the 100 meter butterfly-breaststroke in 1:07.2, in 1949. He later broke his record five more times and held it until February 1952. Well past his peak, Meshkov participated in the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki, Finland, at the age of 36. Meshkov will be honored posthumously.

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