

The International Swimming Hall of Fame's TIMELINE of Women's Swimming History

- ☞ **510 B.C.** - Cloelia, a Roman maid, held hostage with 9 other Roman women by the Etruscans, leads a daring escape from the enemy camp and swims to safety across the Tiber River. She is the most famous female swimmer of Roman legend.
- ☞ **216 A.D.** - The Baths of Caracalla, regarded as the greatest architectural and engineering feat of the Roman Empire and the largest bathing/swimming complex ever built opens. Swimming in the public bath houses was as much a part of Roman life as drinking wine. At first, bathing was segregated by gender, with no mixed male and female bathing, but by the mid second century, men and women bathed together in the nude, which lead to the baths becoming notorious for sexual activities.
- ☞ **600 A.D.** - With the gothic conquest of Rome and the destruction of the Aqueducts that supplied water to the public baths, the baths close. Soon bathing and nudity are associated with paganism and become regarded as sinful activities by the Roman Church.
- ☞ **1200's** - Thinking it might be a useful skill, European sailors relearn to swim and when they do it, it is in the nude. Women, as the gatekeepers of public morality don't swim because they have no acceptable swimming garments.
- ☞ **1538** - In one of the first books published on swimming, Nicholas Winmann reported that young men and maidens bathed together around the stature of St. Nicolai in Zurich, Switzerland. The men swam naked, but the girls wore "bathing drawers." "Sometimes," reported Winman, "a marriage was brought about."
- ☞ **1670** - An English ballad, entitled "The Swimming Lady," is written. It describes a woman who leapt' and "turned to swim upon her back."
- ☞ **1692** - In his book on swimming, Thevenot describes women swimmers in France.
- ☞ **1776** - Benjamin Franklin advocates swimming before going to bed on a hot summer night. Female admirers allegedly join him, wearing elaborate bathing gowns to preserve their decency.
- ☞ **1838** - As swimming becomes popular for men in England, a major publication does not think "English ladies will ever take to the amusement of swimming, which however might prove useful in any emergency."
- ☞ **1851** - A travel book describes Egyptian women as being such good swimmers that they were able to swim against the current.
- ☞ **1859** - Miss Harriet Martineau advocates Baths for ladies in London. Soon days and hours were set apart for women swimmers. Prior to this, Baths were the exclusive domain of men.
- ☞ **1875** - Englishman Matthew Webb becomes the first person to swim across the English Channel. Considered for centuries to be the ultimate test of man's physical capabilities against nature, the feat makes Webb a world-wide celebrity and his feat stimulates popular interest in swimming.
- ☞ **1875** - English teenager Agnes Beckwith, the daughter of a professional swimming instructor, accomplishes a long distance swim in the Thames River from London Bridge to Greenwich, a distance of about 6 miles.
- ☞ **1877** - Eliza Bennett swims across New York City's Hudson River in August.
- ☞ **1880** - Distance swimmer Agnes Beckwith treads water for 30 hours in the whale tank of the Royal Aquarium of Westminster to equal a previous mark set by Matthew Webb.
- ☞ **1882** - At the YWCA in Boston, the first athletic games for women are held in America.
- ☞ **1885** - The Association of Collegiate Alumnae publishes a study which refutes the widely held belief that college study impaired a woman's physical health and ability to bear children.
- ☞ **1888** - The Amateur Athletic Union is formed to establish standards and uniformity in amateur sport.

During its early years, the A.A.U. served as a leader in international sport representing the United States in the international sports federations.

☞ **1892** - The first country to hold a National Swimming Championships for women is Scotland.

☞ **1896** - At the first modern Olympics in Athens, a woman, Melpomene, barred from the official race, runs the same course as the men, finishing in 4 hours 30 minutes. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, says, "It is indecent that the spectators should be exposed to the risk of seeing the body of a women being smashed before their very eyes. Besides, no matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks."

☞ **1899** - The Amateur Swimming Association of England, (as suggested to them by a committee of ladies) approves a costume for ladies taking part in galas with mixed spectators.

☞ **1900** - Nineteen women compete in the modern Olympics Games for the first time in Paris, France. They participate in 3 exhibition sports deemed acceptable for women: tennis, golf, and croquet.

☞ **1901** - The ASA allows a ladies championship to be swum in the presence of men.

☞ **1902** - Mrs. Vautier becomes the first woman to earn the diploma of the Royal Life Saving Society.

☞ **1904** - On June 15th, nearly 1,000 women and girls drown in the East River when the famed New York excursion boat, "General Slocum" catches fire. The difference between life and death was the ability to swim no more than 50 yards. While this shows the need for women to know how to swim when a man isn't around to save them, the question is raised, "how can women learn to swim and still wear modest clothing?"

☞ **1905** - Australian swimmer Annette Kellerman enters an annual race in Paris, sponsored by Paris Match. She is the first woman to enter a race against men and half a million people line the banks of the river to witness the race. Kellerman finishes in a tie with Thomas Burgess, beating sixteen other men and becomes the toast of Paris. Later that summer, Annette Kellerman becomes the first woman to attempt to swim the English Channel. She develops a swimming and diving act which she performs in a glass tank on stage at the London Hippodrome and draws large crowds.

☞ **1905** - Jennie Fletcher (GBR) sets a world record for women in the 100 yard freestyle that stands for seven years.

☞ **1906** - Annette Kellerman wins a race against another female aquatic marvel, the Baroness Isa Cescu, the most famous Austrian swimmer of her time, over a 22 mile (36 km) distance down the Danube River.

☞ **1908** - Annette Kellerman takes her act to America, but authorities believe it is "obscene" because she performs wearing a man's one-piece bathing suit. She stages a one-woman protest against the restrictions on women's aquatic wear and is arrested for wearing a brief one-piece bathing suit on Boston's Revere Beach. The charge was "indecent exposure." These restrictive bathing suit laws, she argued in court, prevented women from learning to swim. The regulation women's costume of long sleeves and heavy bloomers encircled by a woolen 'skirt' was, she said, 'like swimming in a ball gown'. For most women the only possible activity in gear such as that was dabbling in the shallows. The judge understood. He dismissed the charge against her. The resulting newspaper headlines and outpouring of public indignation ring the first death-knell for Victorian attitudes towards women's swimwear.

☞ **1909** - After measuring 10,000 women, Harvard University's famous professor of Physical Culture, Dr. Dudley Sargent, declares Annette Kellerman to be the most perfectly formed woman in America, a "real life Venus de Milo." Billed as "The Diving Venus," Annette Kellerman's act of swimming and diving in a glass tank opens at the Keith Hippodrome Theater in New York. She is paid the astounding sum of \$1250 a week. Her act is a hit and it runs for 4 years.

☞ **1911** - The National Women's Lifesaving League is incorporated in New York City, to encourage swimming and education in life saving for women and to stimulate public opinion in favor of swimming as a branch of elementary education.

☞ **1912** - Much to the chagrin of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, "feminist" Swedes add swimming and div-

ing events for women to the Olympic program.

☞ **1912** - Women swimmers and divers make their Olympic debut at the Games in Stockholm. There are 57 women from 11 nations competing. The A.A.U. refuses to recognize any women's sports and does not even consider sending American women to participate. There are three events: 100M free, 4 x 100 relay and diving. Fanny Durack, of Australia won the 100-meter freestyle in the time of 1:22.2, which equaled a men's time of 1896. Great Britain won the relay. Greta Johanson, of Sweden becomes the first woman diving champion. The racing suits worn by the English women were silk, virtually transparent and created a scandal.

☞ **1912** - Charlotte "Eppy" Epstein, a New York City court reporter, becomes president of the National Women's Life Saving League. The purpose of the League was to encourage women and girls to swim so as to avoid drowning.

☞ **1914** - The American Olympic Committee formally opposes women's athletic competition in the Olympics. The only exception is the gymnastic floor exercise, where women are allowed to only wear long skirts.

☞ **1914** - After an argument with Edward Albee, owner of the vaudeville theater where she was performing, Annette Kellerman quits the stage and pens the script for a film that she convinces a reluctant Universal Studios to produce. "Neptune's Daughter," starring Annette Kellerman, becomes one of the most spectacular success stories in movie history and is the first film to reach \$1 million dollars in ticket sales. The film cost \$35,000 to make.

☞ **1915** - The National Women's Life Saving League officially endorses suffrage and stages a "Suffrage rescue race" at Manhattan Beach. All the female starters wore "votes for women" sashes. A manikin inscribed "anti-suffragette," served as victim' and 'the "suff" mermaids [that is, the swimmers] had to sprint to it' and carry this anti-suffragette manikin 50 yards from shore to safety. The New York Times headline was 'Brave Suffragists Save "Anti" From the Sea', and indicated 'the whole thing was a suffrage feat done in connection with the exhibition of the league'. In this league, 'The water women are all good Suffragists,' reported the Times.

☞ **1915** - Through Epstein's efforts, the Metropolitan Association of the Amateur Athletic Union (A.A.U.) recognizes women's swimming. Epstein is made chair of the Women's Swimming Committee and organizes the first A.A.U. "Women's Swimming and Diving Championships" at Madison Square Garden, in New York. Clare Galligan wins the 1st event, the 500 yard freestyle, and is the first champion woman swimmer of the United States. In addition to the 500 yard freestyle, other events on the program were the 100 and 60 yard swim, a "rescue race", fancy diving and an English Soccer (style water) Polo Match. Recognition by the Metropolitan Assn. is the first step in having the National A.A.U. recognize women's swimming for international competition.

☞ **1916** - Annette Kellerman stars in "Daughter of the Gods." Shot in Jamaica, the production uses 2 million feet of lumber to build sets that were half a mile long. It used 20,000 extras, 44 miles of film and took 8 months to shoot. It is the first film to have a production budget in excess of \$1 million dollars. Kellerman appears nude in several scenes including one in which she dives off a 60 foot cliff. It leads to the formal banning of "nude scenes" from films in 1917.

☞ **1916** - Inspired by Annette Kellerman, Kay Curtis institutes synchronized swimming as an integral part of the University of Wisconsin's physical education program.

☞ **1917** - Largely through Epstein's efforts, the National A.A.U. convention formally recognizes swimming as a sport for women. It is the only sport the organization recognizes for female competition, but it was done so with limitations: "All women contestants in swimming events must wear bathing suits of a black texture that covers their bodies from shoulder to toe." "In every event the women swimmers must wear bath robes that cover them entirely until just before they dive off;" and, "No woman may compete against a man."

☞ **1917** - Charlotte Epstein, founds the Women's Swimming Association of New York, rents one of NYC's only chlorinated pools (in the basement of Brooklyn's Hotel Terrain) and recruits Louis de B. Handley as a volunteer coach. The dapper Handley was a wealthy merchant, a former Olympic champion, author and one of the world's foremost experts on swimming. For training, the W.S.A. endorses the use of Annette Kellerman's one piece racing suits.

☞ **1917** - The American Physical Education Association forms a Committee on Women's Athletics to draft standardized, separate rules for women's collegiate field hockey, swimming, track and field, and soccer.

☞ **1918** - Olga Dorfner, of the Philadelphia Turngemeinde, becomes the first American woman to set world records in swimming: 100 and 200-meter freestyle. Dorfner's coach is Hall of Famer Fred Cady, a former circus strongman and artist who later becomes the coach of the Los Angeles Athletic Club and the University of Southern California. The Turngemeinde was the principal rival of L. deB. Handley's New York Women's Swimming Association.

☞ **1919** - Two members of the W.S.A., Ethelda Bleibtrey, a Charlotte Boyle, both national champion swimmers, are arrested at Manhattan Beach (N.Y.) for "Nude Swimming." As a public protest against bathing suit laws, they removed their stockings before going into the water for a practice swim workout. This was considered nudity in 1919. The resulting publicity and public opinion not only emancipated the mermaids from jail, but women's swimming from stockings.

☞ **1920** - Female swimmers become the first American women to achieve full Olympic status. There are only three events on the Olympic program: the 100-meter and 300-meter freestyles and the 4 by 100-meter freestyle relay. Ethelda Bleibtrey, a member of the W.S.A., wins the gold medals in all three races. It is the only time in Olympic history that one swimmer won all the races on the program. Bleibtrey also held the world record in the 100-yard backstroke.

☞ **1920** - 14-year old Aileen Riggin, a member of the W.S.A. wins the first women's Olympic springboard diving competition. US women will dominate Olympics springboard diving, winning all the gold, silver and bronze medals from 1920 - 1960.

☞ **1920** - Two teams from the Netherlands compete in the first all women's Olympic water polo exhibition during the Olympic Games.

☞ **1921** - Gertrude "Trudy" Ederle, 14, of the W.S.A. wins an international 3-mile swim in New York Bay against 50 of the best swimmers of England and America.

☞ **1921** - E. Fullard-Leo becomes the first woman delegate in AAU convention History. When she arrived for the convention in Chicago, the all male delegates had not realized that the "E." was for Ellen and they would have to accept a woman for the first time. For 75 years, Ellen served as the Grand Dame of Hawaiian Swimming.

☞ **1922** - "Women as Athletes" appears for the first time as a heading in the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature.

☞ **1922** - The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) recognizes track and field competition for women.

☞ **1922** - In an informal meet in Bermuda in 1922, Sybil Bauer, of the Illinois Athletic Club, becomes the first woman to break an existing men's world record when she swims the 440-yard backstroke in 6:24.8, four seconds better than the men's world record, held by Stubby Kruger. Unfortunately, her time was never officially recognized because the meet was unsanctioned.

☞ **1924** - Charlotte Epstein is the first woman to be honored as an Olympic judge.

☞ **1924** - Aileen Riggin becomes the first athlete, male or female, to medal in both the Olympic swimming (bronze medal in the 100-yard backstroke) and diving (silver medal in springboard) competitions in the same Olympic Games. She will go on to become America's first female sportswriter for a major newspaper.

☞ **1924** - Gertrude Ederle wins three medals at the Paris Olympics: a gold in the 4x100-meter relay and

bronze in the 100 and 400-meter freestyle.

☞ **1925** - Charlotte Epstein and Louis deB. Handley conceive of a plan to fund and train a woman swimmer to swim across the English Channel on the 50th Anniversary of Webb's crossing. Since 1875, while hundreds of swimmers had attempted to duplicate Webb's achievement, only five men had succeeded and it was thought to be impossible for a woman. Epstein and Handley were convinced that not only could a woman do it, but by using the crawl stroke, a woman could beat the record time, as all of the successful crossers relied upon the breaststroke. Helen Wainwright and Gertrude Ederle, both 18 years old, are chosen for the swim, but Wainwright is injured in a trolley accident and cannot make the trip to England. Ederle's attempt fails when her trainer touches her, thinking she is in trouble in the water, which leads to a disqualification under accepted rules of previous Channel swims.

☞ **1926** - Betty Becker Pinkston, the gold medalist in springboard diving at the 1924 Olympic Games wins the National 3-meter diving championships while she is five months pregnant, with twins.

☞ **1926** - On August 6, 1926, nineteen-year-old Gertrude Ederle, wearing the first two-piece bathing suit worn in public, becomes the first woman to swim the English Channel in 14 hours, 31 minutes, beating the best time to date by more than 2 hours. (All five men who crossed the channel did it sans suit.) It is to this day, the biggest most significant event in the history of women's athletes. In the New York Daily News, the nation's largest circulation paper, Gertrude and her accomplishment were in the big and black front page headlines not once but for 30 days straight. Her New York Ticker Tape Parade was watched curbside by two million people, twice as many as came out to see General Pershing on his triumphant return from World War I. The significance of her feat did more for women's liberation than any other event in the whole movement for women's rights up until the present time. To gain equal opportunity with men, women had to cross the physical barrier proving that women could and would perform strenuous activities on a par with men. Gertrude broke this barrier. In one great moment she proved the anti-suffrage movement wrong by passing an impossible test.

☞ **1926** - Just three weeks after Ederle's successful Channel crossing, another American woman, Mrs. Clemington Corson of New York made the swim in 15.5 hours. Her record time also beat all the men's swimmers to date. Accompanying her on her swim, in a rowboat was her husband who was so drained after the crossing that he had to be helped ashore by his wife. The scene, said humorist Will Rogers, "gives new meaning to the term 'weaker sex.'"

☞ **1926** - Miss Charlotte Schoemmel becomes the first woman to swim around Manhattan Island.

☞ **1926** - The International Olympic Committee adds gymnastics and five track and field events for women to the 1928 Olympic program.

☞ **1927** - Bubble Gum King William Wrigley, Jr. offers Gertrude Ederle \$10,000 to swim from Catalina Island to Palos Verdes, California. When she declines, he organizes the Wrigley Ocean Marathon race. The race attracts over 150 male and female contestants for a prize of \$40,000 for the winner. The race gains notoriety when Charlotte Schoemmel and other female swimmers announce they will swim naked, like the men.

☞ **1927** - The English Channel Swimming Association is formed in March to authenticate Channel crossings after a British newspaper falsifies the attempt of Dr. Dorothy Logan.

☞ **1927** - Sybil Bauer, perhaps the greatest woman backstroke swimmer of all-time, dies of cancer at the age of 22. At the time of her death, she was engaged to marry Ed Sullivan, then a Chicago sportswriter and later a New York Broadway columnist and long-time host of the television variety show.

☞ **1928** - Martha Norelius becomes the first woman to win back-to-back Olympic titles in the same event: the 400-meter freestyle. A year later, she loses her amateur standing for performing in an aquatic show with "professional swimmers."

☞ **1931** - Swimmer Helene Madison, of Seattle, Washington is named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year.

🌀 **1932** - Helene Madison becomes the first woman to swim the 100 yard freestyle in a minute. She wins three gold medals at the Los Angeles Olympic Games: the 100 and 400-meter freestyle and is on the 4 x 100-meter relay and becomes the first woman to hold all 7 world records recognized for freestyle, from 100 yards to 1500 meters.

🌀 **1932** - Eleanor Holm, of the W.S.A., wins the 100-meter backstroke at the Olympic Games. After the Games, she marries band leader Arthur Jarret. She joins Jarret's act, singing on stage in a white bathing suit and high heels and signs a film contract with Warner Brothers, but refuses to appear in any film swimming so that she can retain her amateur status. Eight (8) year old Mary Hoerger, of Miami Beach, FL finished 9th in the Olympic Diving Trials after her mother hired a lawyer to force the AAU to accept her entry. She is the youngest person to compete in a US Olympic Trial event.

🌀 **1934** - The Modern Mermaids, a synchronized swim team, perform at the Chicago World's Fair.

🌀 **1935** - Mary Hoerger of Miami Beach, FL becomes the youngest national diving champion at age 11. (Judges underscore her at the 1936 Olympic Trials, because of her age, and she fails to make the 1936 Olympic Team. In 1937 her mother dies and she is forced to quit diving.)

🌀 **1936** - Katherine Rawls wins five individual events at the American Olympic trials, four in swimming and one in springboard diving.

🌀 **1936** - Eleanor Holm, the 1932 Olympic Backstroke Champion and world record holder, is banned from the Olympic Team for drinking champagne on the ship taking the team to Berlin. "This chaperone came up to me and told me it was time to go to bed. God, it was about 9 o'clock, and who wanted to go down in that basement to sleep anyway? So I said to her: 'Oh, is it really bedtime? Did you make the Olympic team or did I?' I had had a few glasses of Champagne. So she went to Brundage (President of the American Olympic Committee) and complained that I was setting a bad example for the team, and they got together and told me the next morning that I was fired. I was heartbroken. I was everything that Avery Brundage hated," said Holm. She was married, was a well-known club singer and had some money. "All this was against his conception of what a woman athlete should be. But in all honesty, I would have been just another female backstroke swimmer without Brundage." The incident makes her worldwide celebrity and as "the Champagne girl" is the toast of Berlin during the Games.

🌀 **1936** - American diver Marjorie Gestring becomes the youngest-ever Olympic gold medalist (in springboard diving) at age 13 yrs. 9 months.

🌀 **1936** - American diver Dorothy Poynton becomes the first woman to win back-to-back titles in tower diving. Dorothy made her first Olympic appearance at the 1928 Olympic Games, where she won a bronze medal in springboard diving at the age of 13 years and 1 month.

🌀 **1937** - Swimmer/Diver Katherine Rawls is named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year.

🌀 **1937** - Eleanor Holm signs to become the feature player in Billy Rose's Aquacade, which opens in Cleveland, Ohio. She had approached Rose with the idea for the show, modeled after shows choreographed by Annette Kellerman years earlier, shortly after returning from Berlin. Aileen Riggin, who was a ballerina in addition to being a two-time Olympic Champion and sportswriter, is signed on as the choreographer. The show is a huge hit.

🌀 **1939** - Inspired by the success of the Aquacade, the first synchronized swimming competition in the United States is held. It is a dual meet between Wright Junior College and the Chicago Teacher's College.

🌀 **1939** - Eleanor Holm, performs along side of Johnny Weissmuller in Billy Rose's Aquacade at the World's Fair in New York. It is the most popular attraction at the fair, drawing over 5 million spectators and helps popularize swimming nationwide. Eleanor also divorces her husband after newspapers reveal a scandalous affair with Billy Rose, who was married at the time to Fanny Brice, the famous Vaudeville comedian. After their divorces, Rose and Holm marry in 1940.

🌀 **1939** - Kor Kint (NED) sets a world record in the 100 meter backstroke that stands for 17 years. Ragnhild Hveger, also from the Netherlands, becomes the second woman to hold all 7 recognized world records

in the freestyle.

🌀 **1939** - Esther Williams, of Los Angeles, wins the 100-meter freestyle at the U.S. National Championships. In an exhibition, she also breaks the national record in the 100-yard breaststroke.

🌀 **1940** - Georgia Coleman, the beautiful and glamorous Olympic Gold medalist in springboard diving at the 1932 Olympic Games, dies of complications after contracting polio at the age of 28. She was the first woman to do a 2 ½ forward somersault in competition.

🌀 **1940** - World War II breaks out and the Olympic Games are cancelled. Esther Williams turns pro and joins the Billy Rose Aquacade in the San Francisco cast, starring alongside Johnny Weissmuller. Eleanor Holm's new costar in the New York cast is 1932 Olympic champion and movie star, Buster Crabbe.

🌀 **1941** - The Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) adopts synchronized swimming as an official competitive sport for duet and team events. The first Synchronized Swimming Championship is held March 1, in Wilmette, IL.

🌀 **1944** - Swimmer Ann Curtis becomes the first woman to win the James E. Sullivan Memorial Award, presented annually by the Amateur Athletic Union since 1930. The Sullivan Award is named after the former AAU president and given to the athlete who, "by his or her performance, example and influence as an amateur, has done the most during the year to advance the cause of sportsmanship." An athlete cannot win the award more than once.

🌀 **1944** - Ann Curtis is also named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year.

🌀 **1944** - MGM releases "Bathing Beauty," starring Red Skelton and Esther Williams in her first starring role. MGM creates "Swim for Health Week" to promote the film and draw attention to the many health benefits of swimming for exercise. Swimming is touted to women as the way to get a perfect figure - like Esther's.

🌀 **1948** - American Vicki Manolo Draves wins both women's Olympic diving events at the London Olympic Games and along with diver Dr. Sammy Lee they become the first Asian Americans to win a gold medals.

🌀 **1948** - Greta Andersen (DEN) wins the 1948 Olympic 100m freestyle sprint.

🌀 **1951** - Pat McCormick becomes the first diver to ever win all five national championships. She took a gold in springboard diving and a gold in platform diving at the Helsinki Summer Games, as well. She also wins AAU's James E. Sullivan Memorial Award.

🌀 **1951** - The US solo and duet champions, Beulah Gundling, Connie Todoroff and Shirley Simpson, demonstrate synchronized swimming at the first Pan American Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

🌀 **1951** - Florence Chadwick, a 32-year old typist from California, becomes the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions and is also the first to swim from England to France against the tide.

🌀 **1952** - MGM releases "Million Dollar Mermaid," starring Esther Williams. The film is based on the life story of Annette Kellerman.

🌀 **1952** - Beulah Gundling of the United States performs the first exhibition of synchronized swimming at an Olympic Games in Helsinki.

🌀 **1955** - The Pan American Games in Mexico City include synchronized swimming as an official event for the first time. The US wins all three events.

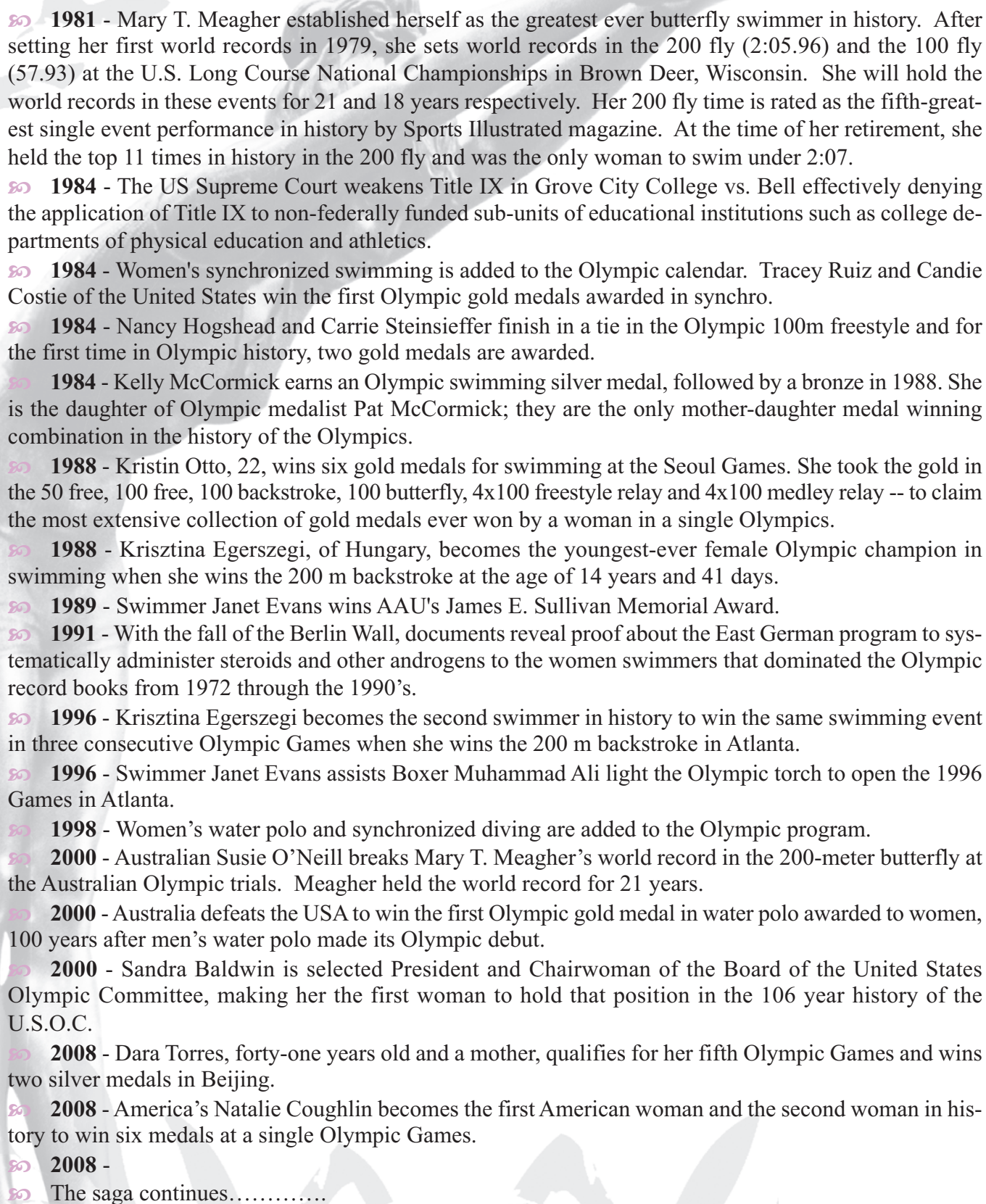
🌀 **1956** - Australian swimmer Dawn Fraser wins the gold in the 100-meter freestyle at the Melbourne Olympics, the first of a career total of eight medals—four gold and four silver, four in individual events and four in relays—and 39 world records. She will be the first woman to win four Olympic gold medals and the first swimmer to win an event in three straight Olympiads (the 100 Free in 1956, 1960 and 1964).

🌀 **1956** - Pat McCormick becomes the first woman to win back-to-back springboard and platform diving events at the Olympics. She is named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year.

🌀 **1960** - Donna de Varona is the youngest member of the 1960 US Olympic swimming team at 13.

🌀 **1962** - Swimmer Dawn Fraser is named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year.

- ☞ **1962** - Betty Philcox, swimming coach and international team chaperone, becomes the first woman appointed as chair of the A.A.U.'s James E. Sullivan Memorial Award Committee.
- ☞ **1964** - American Don Schollander become the first person to win four gold medals in swimming at an Olympic Games. The female star of the Tokyo Games is two-time gold medalist Donna de Varona. Both Schollander and deVarona are 18 years old and swim for George Haines at Santa Clara Swim Club, but there is only a boy's swim team at Santa Clara High School. Schollander goes on to a brilliant NCAA career at Yale and wins another gold medal at the 1968 Olympic Games. With no collegiate scholarships or varsity programs for women, de Varona retires. She becomes a leading figure in the movement to create equal athletic participation opportunities for women.
- ☞ **1965** - Donna de Varona, a 1964 Olympic swimmer, becomes the first woman sports broadcaster on national TV for ABC.
- ☞ **1968** - Swimmer Debbie Meyer wins AAU's James E. Sullivan Memorial Award. The year before she was named the Woman Athlete of the Year - by the Soviet news agency, TASS!
- ☞ **1968** - Debbie Meyer, 16, becomes the first female to win three Olympic gold medals in individual events as she sets Olympic records in the 200-meter, 400-meter and 800-meter freestyle races at the Mexico City Olympic Games.
- ☞ **1969** - Debbie Meyer is named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year.
- ☞ **1972** - Australian Shane Gould breaks Dawn Fraser's 100 m freestyle world record (Fraser held the record for 16 years) and at the Munich Olympics becomes the first person to win five individual Olympic medals in a single Olympic Games. At one point in her brief career, Shane held every freestyle world record and also the record in the 200 m individual medley.
- ☞ **1972** - At the Munich Olympics, Shirley Babashoff, 15, wins the first of her eight Olympic medals in swimming. She won 27 national championships, and was a member of five world-record-setting relay teams.
- ☞ **1972** - Congress passes Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activities receiving Federal financial assistance." When President Nixon signs the act on July 23 about 31,000 women are involved in college sports; spending on athletic scholarships for women is less than \$100,000; and the average number of women's teams at a college is 2.1.
- ☞ **1974** - Donna de Varona co-founds the Women's Sports Foundation, serving as the organization's first president.
- ☞ **1975** - Title IX goes effect on June 21.
- ☞ **1976** - Shirley Babashoff becomes the all-time Olympic medal leader among US women. She wins one gold and two silver medals in 1972, along with one gold and four silvers in 1976.
- ☞ **1977** - Cindy Nicholas (CAN) completes the first two-way crossing of the English Channel by a woman and breaks the existing men's record.
- ☞ **1978** - The Amateur Sports Act of 1978, prohibiting gender discrimination in open amateur sports, makes training facilities and money more available to women and minorities.
- ☞ **1978** - Swimmer Tracy Caulkins wins AAU's James E. Sullivan Memorial Award.
- ☞ **1978** - 13-year old Penny Dean sets an English Channel swimming record for men and women with a time of 7 hours 40 minutes.
- ☞ **1979** - Dr. Sylvia Earle becomes the first person in the world to dive to a depth of 1,250 feet. She led an all-woman team of scientists in an experiment in undersea living, staying for two weeks in a submerged capsule in the Caribbean Sea.
- ☞ **1980** - Cynthia Potter becomes a four time Olympian (1968 – 80) wins a record 28 U.S. Senior National diving titles on Springboard and Platform.

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- ☞ **1981** - Mary T. Meagher established herself as the greatest ever butterfly swimmer in history. After setting her first world records in 1979, she sets world records in the 200 fly (2:05.96) and the 100 fly (57.93) at the U.S. Long Course National Championships in Brown Deer, Wisconsin. She will hold the world records in these events for 21 and 18 years respectively. Her 200 fly time is rated as the fifth-greatest single event performance in history by Sports Illustrated magazine. At the time of her retirement, she held the top 11 times in history in the 200 fly and was the only woman to swim under 2:07.
 - ☞ **1984** - The US Supreme Court weakens Title IX in *Grove City College vs. Bell* effectively denying the application of Title IX to non-federally funded sub-units of educational institutions such as college departments of physical education and athletics.
 - ☞ **1984** - Women's synchronized swimming is added to the Olympic calendar. Tracey Ruiz and Candie Costie of the United States win the first Olympic gold medals awarded in synchro.
 - ☞ **1984** - Nancy Hogshead and Carrie Steinsieffer finish in a tie in the Olympic 100m freestyle and for the first time in Olympic history, two gold medals are awarded.
 - ☞ **1984** - Kelly McCormick earns an Olympic swimming silver medal, followed by a bronze in 1988. She is the daughter of Olympic medalist Pat McCormick; they are the only mother-daughter medal winning combination in the history of the Olympics.
 - ☞ **1988** - Kristin Otto, 22, wins six gold medals for swimming at the Seoul Games. She took the gold in the 50 free, 100 free, 100 backstroke, 100 butterfly, 4x100 freestyle relay and 4x100 medley relay -- to claim the most extensive collection of gold medals ever won by a woman in a single Olympics.
 - ☞ **1988** - Krisztina Egerszegi, of Hungary, becomes the youngest-ever female Olympic champion in swimming when she wins the 200 m backstroke at the age of 14 years and 41 days.
 - ☞ **1989** - Swimmer Janet Evans wins AAU's James E. Sullivan Memorial Award.
 - ☞ **1991** - With the fall of the Berlin Wall, documents reveal proof about the East German program to systematically administer steroids and other androgens to the women swimmers that dominated the Olympic record books from 1972 through the 1990's.
 - ☞ **1996** - Krisztina Egerszegi becomes the second swimmer in history to win the same swimming event in three consecutive Olympic Games when she wins the 200 m backstroke in Atlanta.
 - ☞ **1996** - Swimmer Janet Evans assists Boxer Muhammad Ali light the Olympic torch to open the 1996 Games in Atlanta.
 - ☞ **1998** - Women's water polo and synchronized diving are added to the Olympic program.
 - ☞ **2000** - Australian Susie O'Neill breaks Mary T. Meagher's world record in the 200-meter butterfly at the Australian Olympic trials. Meagher held the world record for 21 years.
 - ☞ **2000** - Australia defeats the USA to win the first Olympic gold medal in water polo awarded to women, 100 years after men's water polo made its Olympic debut.
 - ☞ **2000** - Sandra Baldwin is selected President and Chairwoman of the Board of the United States Olympic Committee, making her the first woman to hold that position in the 106 year history of the U.S.O.C.
 - ☞ **2008** - Dara Torres, forty-one years old and a mother, qualifies for her fifth Olympic Games and wins two silver medals in Beijing.
 - ☞ **2008** - America's Natalie Coughlin becomes the first American woman and the second woman in history to win six medals at a single Olympic Games.
 - ☞ **2008** -
 - ☞ The saga continues.....