



Gertrude Ederle, Honor Swimmer, United States of America, 1963



Playing chess with IMSHOF Honoree Ishak Helmy

Videos: [Documentary 1](#) [Show 1](#) [Show 2](#) [Pathé 1](#) [Pathé 2](#) [ISHOF 1](#)

Gertrude Ederle was the first woman to swim the English Channel in 14 hours and 39 minutes in 1926. This set the overall speed record which was broken a few weeks later by a male swimmer and in 1938 by a female. When Gertrude returned to New York City, an estimated 2 million New Yorkers lined the sidewalks on August 27, 1926, to heap their applause and tons of confetti on her. In her swim she wore a revolutionary two-piece bathing suit and personally designed wrap-around goggles, which were kept watertight with molten candle wax.

She swam in the 1928 Canadian National Exhibition and toured America after her Channel record, demonstrating her freestyle in a specially built swimming tank and made cameo appearances at Billy Rose's Aquacade at the New York World's Fair in 1939.

At the 1924 Paris Olympic, she won a gold medal as the leadoff swimmer on the United States 4×100 meter freestyle relay to set a world record and added bronze medals in the 100 meter and 400 meter freestyle races. She set 29 world and American records, at distances from 100 meters to 500 meters.

She was deaf from childhood due to measles and dedicated her life to teaching deaf children. She is also an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (1965).

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)