



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 \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)