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Sent: Friday, 1 December 2017 1:39 PM
To: cguesdon@bigpond.com
Subject: Letter from the Chair of IMSHOF



A Message From The Chair

Time to Reflect

It is time for reflection as we approach year's end and therefore prepare for another year in the marathon swimming world.

This is my final address to you as an executive member as my two-year tenure as Chair is complete at the end of this year 2017.

The IMSHOF organisation offers credibility and status to the world of marathon swimming.

During this term regulations and operations as always were under review and policy changes have been made to benefit the organisation. There are two major policy achievements of this Committee that stand out. The resolute policy decision to sanction the swimming bodies' rules for swimming costumes which had heretofore been unresolved. The other key policy decision was to ban anyone from IMSHOF induction who had ever had a positive drug test from a recognised drug-testing organisation. Apart from these policies we have achieved much more in our quest to be distinctively global and we are proudly demonstrating gender equality to the world.

Whilst our history can be traced back to 1875 when Captain Webb RN started it all as we know it now, it was following the conclusion of the second world war that the world of open water swimming/marathon swimming, really grasped a toe-hold in the aquatic sports around the world.

During the 1950s and 60s open water swimmers in increasing numbers moved out of the confines of swimming pools of all shapes and sizes and ventured into the unknown open waters of the world. Solo marathon swims, long distance swims and marathon swimming races of varying distances sprang up all over the world. Independent bodies turned solo swimming course successes into racing events which attracted the great swimmers of the time and continues to this day.

In that period two world bodies sprang up. One as a nations body the ILDSF (International Long Distance Swimming Federation) and the other was the swimmers' body, the WPMSF (the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation). Both made their contribution to our sport in different ways and both were very successful. They are now long gone. The national 'pool swimming' bodies decided their world body FINA should oversee swimming outside of swimming pools. Thus, the open water swimming discipline arrived. The nations of the world and FINA have continued the movement that started over a century ago. As we know FINA have open water world titles, continental championships and national titles over varying distances. However, the ultimate event of them all is the inclusion in the Olympic Games the biggest sports festival in the world.

Solo swims continue where there is a body of water to be tamed. The feats of those amazing pioneer swimmers of the past set the standard for today's proliferation of events.

In the early 1960s it was the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation people who mooted having a recognition foundation and from it came what we know now as the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. The administrators who served our sport for over a century mostly as volunteers and those leaders who led the fine committees of their time are recognised in the Davids Wheeler Award Honour Roll. The IMSHOF is the worldwide aquatic peak body for marathon swimming recognition. The names and stories of those who led the sport around the world in so many arenas appear on our website Honour Roll. These stories make riveting reading to people interested in those forerunners of our sport.

The history of making the IMSHOF what it is today is a result of some incredible custodians who led the organisation through the good times and the low. They put in place and kept the key building pillars for strategic success for over half a century. The IMSHOF brand was established and now is strong and is a powerful organisation in the sporting world.

There are many worthy contributors who set our course over time. However, history will show our organisation's outstanding leaders through the ages namely Joe Grossman, Buck Dawson, Gerald Forsberg, Denis Matuch, Dale Petranec, Steven Munatones and David Yudovin were driving forces in their period of service. These people were guardians and visionaries.

INCOMING IMSHOF CHAIR

The incoming IMSHOF Chair for the two-year tenure 2018 & 2019 is Ned Denison. Ned and the expert Executive Committee and Selection Panel

Members will keep us ahead of the game you can be assured of that. I thank my fellow Executive team for their professionalism and productivity. They are all truly dedicated. This year the appointment of Melissa Cunningham-Roberts and Richard Broer brought a wealth of ability and knowledge to the Executive Committee. Together with Dale Petranech, Beth Yudovin and Chaired by Ned Denison the IMSHOF is set to continue our core aim which is to immortalise the career achievements and career contributions of those who have distinguished themselves in this sport.

In 2018 we have our new marathoners from 13 nations and from every continent who will be inducted into the Hall. They will join the 269 who have been honoured previously for their magnificent careers. Their names will be inscribed on the IMSHOF Sea Goddess trophy along with those previously inducted since 1963.

On reflection, while writing this piece of history I feel that I am privileged to have lived and served WPMSF & ILDSF throughout the era mentioned above.

Now, after eight years as part of the IMSHOF management team I believe it is time for fresh eyes. It is time for me to close the office door following a virtual lifetime in the sport.

I leave this organisation in the hands of the next generation with total confidence and excitement for the future and all that it may bring.

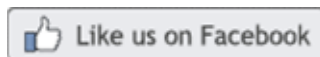
Compliments of the season to you all.

Christopher Guesdon

Chris Guesdon
Chair IMSHOF



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