



Bill Heiss

SWIMMING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Bill began swimming at the Littleton YMCA at the age of 10, finishing 2nd in the state championships in the 40 yard freestyle (No that is not a typo—the state meet was swum in the 20 yard widths of the Congress Park Pool).

He began swimming more seriously with Sam Jones in Denver and later joined the Celebrity Swim Club where he won numerous state championships. Swimming for University High School in Greeley, he won six Colorado High School Championships and was a High School All American for several years. He first qualified for the US Olympic Trials as a 16 year old.

Bill received a scholarship in 1970 to swim at Indiana University for Doc Councilman, where he was part of a string of 20 consecutive Big 10 conference and 6 consecutive NCAA team championships, losing only the NCAA Championship his senior year by 1 point. One Sports Illustrated writer stated “a good case can be made for the 1971 Indiana swimming team being the best college team ever—in any sport”. Other sports writers

have said that a dual meet between the 1971 Indiana team and the best of the rest of the world would have gone down to the last relay.

Bill was a 6 time NCAA Division I All-American and the 1974 Big 10 Conference Champion in the 200 yd. Free. In the 1973 summer nationals, he swam on 3 national champion relays, one of which set an American National club record.

After starting Law School at the University of Wyoming in 1974, he accepted a job as a Spanish National Swimming Coach at the national training centers in Barcelona and Madrid. In 1976 he returned to the University of Wyoming where he was the assistant swimming coach for five years.

While at Wyoming, he was encouraged to swim in a professional marathon race, sponsored by the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation in 1977. Although he would have preferred professional 200-400 meter races, Bill competed for five years in these 10-30 mile marathon events, as there were no other professional swimming events at the time. He held the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation No.2 ranking in 1977 and 1978 behind John Kinsella, and was No. 3 in 1979.

As a professional marathon swimmer he was one of the top finisher in races in Lac St. Jean, Quebec; Paspebiac, Quebec; LaTuque, Quebec; Atlantic City, NJ; Chicago, IL; Nile River, Egypt; Suez Canal, Egypt; Capri-Naples, Italy; and Santa Fe-Coronda, Argentina.

In 1978, his time for the 31 mile crossing of Lake Ontario that was part of the 1978 Canadian National Exhibition, is the 8th fastest recorded for the crossing. Also in 1978, he teamed up with John Kinsella to win the “24 Hours LaTuque”, LaTuque, Canada by swimming a team total of 67 miles. During his professional career Bill won the following international marathons:

Suez Canal Marathon 1979

Rio Parana Marathon, Santa Fe, Argentina 1979

Nile River Marathon, Luxor, Egypt 1980

Nile River Marathon Cairo, Egypt 1979, 1980

Some of these races are memorable for the large crowds of spectators. It isn't often that a swimmer gets to be watched by hundreds of thousands of spectators.

PERSONAL LIFE

Bill lives with his wife, Susan, in Casper, Wyoming. His two children, Kristen and Erik, both excelled in swimming. Kristen was a member of the U.S. National Team 2008-2009, swam at Texas A&M, and is currently the assistant men's and women's swimming coach at the University of Missouri. Erik was a Wyoming state swimming champion and multi-sport athlete.