

AZ Masters swimmer Lou Silverstein, Prescott (7-14-1926 to 1-18-2014):

QUIET HERO AND INSPIRATION

Masters swimmer Lou Silverstein, of Prescott was widely regarded as an inspiration by countless other Masters swimmers! Lou died in January, and all AZLMSC members send his wife Nancy our good wishes and many expressions of sympathy. Lou was a hero to his Prescott community, where he pioneered in broadcasting and created KAHM Radio in 1981.

To quote from Lou's obituary: "...Swimming was another passion from childhood until his death. (Lou) is credited with creating the U Az (Tucson) Swim Team in 1945, and he earned many championships in college, Masters Swimming and Senior Olympics. He always supported youth swimming" ...making generous donations in his usual low-key manner, to the U Az teams under Frank Busch, and to the teams at Prescott and Bradshaw Mountain high schools.(PHS Swim Coach Brigid Bunch wrote for us her comments below).

AZ Masters swimmer Nancy Kinney sent us some of her memories of Lou: "This from an old Prescott friend : Lou and I started swimming together in the 1940's at the UofAz and kept at it all our lives. We were pals for a very long time and I will miss him."

Nancy added : " I am certain that Lou and I went back further than God to 1946, when we were both at UofAz and swam in two different pools, men's and women's. And he hung out at the Kappa House, where he was "constant".... We were all athletes, graduating together. Then Lou and I living in Prescott and swimming at Yavapai College where I coached the kids' swim team. Lou and I competed in Masters for Prescott until I moved back to Phoenix in 1989!"

Prescott's AZ Masters swimmers (Coach) Brigid Bunch and Gaile Harden used to practise with Lou in the Y pool. They wrote to add their memories of Lou to this article, so other AZ Masters may also be inspired by what Lou did for swimming, and the way he did it.

Prescott High School swim coach, Brigid Bunch writes: "I will miss Lou more than I can put into words. He was my inspiration in swimming. He gave, so that Prescott could start the high school swim teams in 2001. Through that donation he has touched hundreds of Prescott's kids – giving them a chance at being a team that they wouldn't otherwise have." Brigid writes of Lou's unforgettable races – 200 fly, 400 IM, 1750 free – all races that are huge challenges to most swimmers, including those many years younger than Lou himself. Lou remained modest and low key, despite his amazing swims and victories, all of which brought countless points to AZ Masters teams and relays.

Fondly remembering Lou, Gaile Harden writes of his whimsical and memorable quirks. Gaile swam in the Prescott Y pool "about the same time that Lou Silverstein did. We both wanted the "warm lanes" (away from the drafts of cold air). I usually swam in Lane 1, Lou in Lane 2. Whoever arrived first got the outside lane; most people knew not to get into Lou's lane. If they

tried, he's have this big smile and say "Yes, I'll share with you but I do a wide butterfly" and they usually moved on!

"At meets you could tell Lou he's had a great swim, and he'd say "but not as fast as I used to do", shaking his head. Recent years, you always had to shout for him to hear you, and if he couldn't, he'd just smile that little boy smile and say 'hi'."

Adding affectionately of Lou, as do so many others in AZ LMSC, Gaile says "We'll miss Lou, here in Prescott especially."

To give you an even more interesting picture of our inspiration Lou's life and gifts to us all, here's the link to the Courier's superb article about Lou - "Quiet benefactor dies" – (Prescott Daily Courier, January 26, 2014.) Written by Karen Despain, and with comments from Lou's friends and colleagues, this article is a MUST READ. The Courier's editor has given us/AZ LMSC permission to publish and quote from Ms Despain's outstanding account of Lou, his work, and his lifelong play.

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