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## **Former Hinsdale Central High School Swim Coach Don Watson Inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame**



*John Kinsella (left), Coach Don Watson (center) and Sandra Bucha Kerscher admire the ISHOF award.  
(Photo courtesy of William McGowan Photography)*

**Hinsdale, Ill. – June 29, 2015** – Hinsdale Township High School District 86 today congratulated former Hinsdale Central High School Swim Team Coach Don Watson for his induction into the International Swimming Hall of Fame. Coach Watson was joined by over 75 former Hinsdale Central swimmers at the ceremony that took place on June 20 in Santa Clara, Calif.

Coach Watson is the fourth Hinsdale Central inductee into International Swimming Hall of Fame, following former swimmers John Kinsella, Sandra Bucha Kerscher and Bob Dudley.

“I had a dream to be inducted but I figured it wasn’t meant to be, I left Hinsdale Central 37 years ago,” said Coach Watson. “To get that phone call, to receive the most prestigious award that any swim coach could ever receive, I was thrilled, absolutely elated.”

“The foundation of all my success is tied to the support that I received from the Board of Education and the community,” continued Coach Watson. “To teach a comprehensive aquatic program, there weren’t many places offering that, it was unique. I am also happy that today girls have the same opportunities to compete as boys, when I started, it wasn’t like that.”

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A former assistant coach to the legendary Doc Counsilman at Indiana University, Coach Watson became one of the most successful high-school swimming coaches in history, producing swimmers who earned 167 high school All-America titles, four Olympic medals and multiple world professional marathon swimming titles. Watson was voted Coach of the Year by the American Swimming Coaches Association in 1970 and served as USA team coach or manager at six major international competitions. Coach Watson joined the District in 1963 and led the swimming program at Hinsdale Central from 1967 to 1978 before becoming the Director of the University of Texas Swimming Stadium and the Longhorn Aquatic Swim Club. He retired in 2005.



*Coach Watson with his wife Jan  
(Photo courtesy of William McGowan Photography)*

“Coach Watson instilled the understanding that each swimmer could achieve their best with their God-given abilities” said former state champion and All-American Hinsdale swimmer Russ Meyer. “Not every swimmer would stand on the podium, but we knew that if we worked hard, were good teammates, stayed persistent and maintained a positive attitude, we would be successful. As Coach Watson always said, ‘nothing great was every accomplished without enthusiasm.’”

Mr. Meyer continued, “Coach Watson was strong advocate of gender equality in swimming. He wanted men and women to have the same opportunity to excel, prior to Title IX. He also pushed us to achieve our academic goals and enjoyed seeing us advance our college education and careers. He provided an environment that promoted values that have served us well in all areas of our lives, his approach to success was never just about swimming. That’s why there were over 75 former swimmers who came to Santa Clara, CA to pay tribute to him during his International Swimming Hall of Fame induction over Father’s Day weekend. His guiding principles established a legacy that continues to this day.”

Of the over 75 former Hinsdale swimmers who attended the event; six of the attendees have already been inducted into the Hinsdale Hall of Fame: Bob Nieman, John Kinsella, Sandra Bucha Kerscher, George Tidmarsh, Jack Ekl and John Murphy. Four of the attendees are Olympians and world record holders including John Kinsella (world record holder, 1968 silver and 1972 gold medalist), John Murphy (record holder, 1972 gold and bronze medalist), three-time Olympian Bob Nieman and world record holder Mark Lambert. They were joined by many national individual champions, national high school record holders, and individual state champions.

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