

A Tribute to Beverley Tucker

1935-2008

Bev Tucker held the Ed Thomas trophy for the oldest lady completing the 5 km course at St Marys for the years 2004-2007, and still holds the records for the 65-69 and 70-74 age groups.

Bev passed away peacefully, surrounded by her family, at the General and Marine Hospital, Collingwood, on Friday April 4th, 2008, at age 73.

Apart from swimming, Bev had achieved many things in the business world. At her funeral on April 9th, the minister recalled how Bev had achieved every young boy's dream – that of becoming a pilot !



Bev's friend, Glad Bryce, delivered a wonderful eulogy at the funeral service. It provides a great review of Bev, the things she loved, and many of her achievements. It is reproduced below:

We are here today to celebrate Bev's life and I am covering her sport interests and speaking on behalf of her many swim connections. Those connections span many parts of the world and her friendships are vast. Bev and I have been on the same swim team for many years and we have been roommates at local and international competitions.

Beginning in the 1950's, Bev's early interest in swimming was in the synchronized swimming area when she was part of a delegation to the 1952 Olympics which attempted to get Synchronized swimming introduced into the Olympics. It took a few years to get the sport recognized but Bev's memories of those days were as clear as they were in 1952. When the two of us visited the Olympic Museum in Lucerne, Switzerland a couple of years ago as we were on our way to the FINA World Championships in Riccione, Italy, I lost Bev in the museum as I was poring over one of the swim exhibits. I found her later, sitting in front of a small screen watching an old 1952 film of some swimmers. She was in tears (of happiness, she said) as she recalled those exciting synchro days.

In recent years, Bev has transferred her swim interests to Masters swimming which is an organization that encourages swimming as a fitness activity and also as a competitive outlet for those who are so inclined. Bev certainly was inclined. She has been competing internationally for over 10 years and her best stroke is the breast stroke. Her love of open water swims has taken her far afield as well, and she was always up for the challenge of a 3 km or a 5 km swim. Some of those swims were in frigid waters, stormy conditions and often in parts of an ocean which contained more than friendly fish. Bev served as President of Masters Swim Ontario for a couple of years, 'just doing her part' as she termed it.

Even more recently, Bev decided that she should try being a Triathlete so that meant getting a bike, training in running and getting all three sports put together in a triathlon. She managed to do several races and enjoyed being the oldest competitor in many of them.

There has always been a sense of fun and adventure in Bev's make-up and that came out in many of our experiences at international events especially when most of the Canadian team would be housed in close proximity. As my roommate, I can verify that Bev has been seen going on rather odd trips in search of fine red wines, dashing off to a nude beach with a naturalist, dancing under the stars with the male Australian diving team, jumping for joy when our women's relay team set a record, or right here in Collingwood visiting the all night A & P in our nightgowns to get some yogurt. She loved to laugh and was always up for fun-loving antics.

Bev's enjoyment of life included her family and she spoke fondly of all of her immediate family. Her grandchildren were very important to her and she would tell her friends all about them. Things like her canoeing with Ryan at Lake Skootamata and attending a dance recital of Kelly Ann's or just hanging out with grandkids. My reason for including this in my talk today is to stress that Bev as a Mom and as a *Grandma Beach* were roles that meant a great deal to her and she shared that with her many friends.

Many of you know that Bev was training for the FINA World Swim Championships which are being held in Perth, Australia in a week or so from now. Less than 3 weeks ago, Bev was in the pool training for her events and she had planned to enter the Ontario Championships held at the end of March as a final training event before going to Perth. She had planned to compete in the Canadian National Swim Championships to be held in Quebec City this May after she returned from Australia.

How quickly these plans changed after an operation showed her life was to take a drastically different direction. The same will and stamina she showed in her swim training were then directed towards her health and coming to terms with her final days here on Earth. Bev was able to get the final things done in terms of her emotional approach to her disease and her physical body was soon ready to swim off to another place.

As we celebrate the part she has played in each of our lives, let us give thanks for her spirit, her physical strength and abilities, her willingness to share herself with us, her sense of fun and for the precious memories that each person who knew her has. Those memories don't die; they live on within each of us.

Thank you Bev for all you have given.

