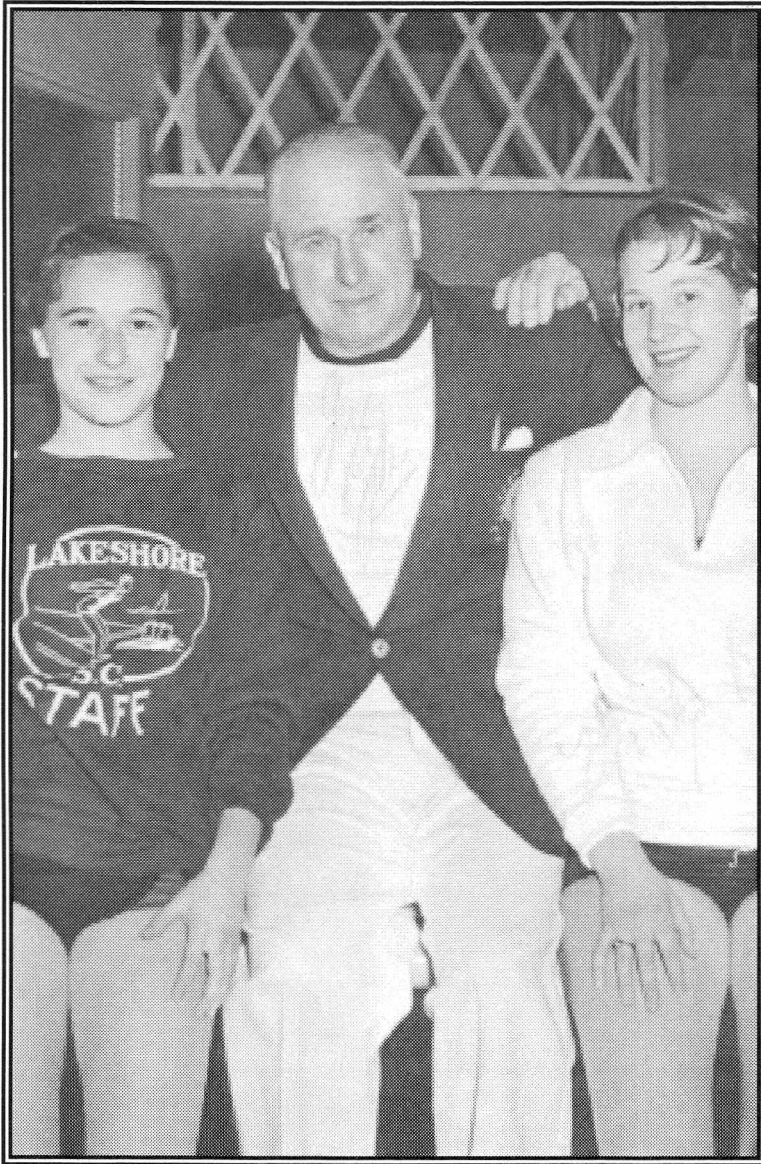


# Gus Ryder



**Ontario Aquatic Hall of Fame**

Inducted as Pioneer Builder in 1992

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Born in Toronto, Gus Ryder played a variety of sports in his youth. Swimming was one of his fortes and, among others, in the USA and around Toronto, he competed in several Across-the-Bay and Gap-to-Gap races. He might have continued as an all-round athlete, had it not been for an incident when he was 18 years old.

While playing hockey one day late in February 1917 on Grenadier Pond, two of his fellow players broke through the ice. Gus rescued them, but he himself was trapped several seconds under the ice. It seemed more like minutes or hours to him, and that was when he vowed to learn more about swimming and lifesaving and teach those skills to others.

In 1930, Gus Ryder at last was able to put his resolve into action when he landed a job as lifeguard at New Toronto beach and founded the New Toronto Swim Club. At the end of the summer, the club counted 700 members and he renamed it Lakeshore Swim Club with the motto "Everyone a Lifesaver."

For over twenty years, Gus Ryder could not afford the luxury of training his swimmers in his own pool. In summer they first trained in Lake Ontario at the foot of 7th Street and later in the Port Credit River. In winter they swam at the West End YMCA and Humberstone Collegiate pools. Finally, in 1952, the club received its permanent home in the newly built New Toronto War Memorial Pool.

Some better known swimmers Gus trained included long distance swimmers Cliff Lumsdon and Marilyn Bell. Marilyn, who was not a fast swimmer, impressed Gus Ryder as having qualities that would make her a long distance swimmer. He successfully persuaded her father not to withdraw her from the sport and, consequently, Marilyn Bell became the first person to swim across Lake Ontario.

Besides training competitive and long distance swimmers, Gus Ryder spent over 45 years working with disabled swimmers. He devoted much time, effort, and even personal finances to this particular group of swimmers. The fact is that Gus Ryder pioneered disabled swimming in this province. He trained more swimmers in Ontario than any other coach, but he once said that he would rather work with disabled and handicapped children than coach an Olympic swimmer. He once received a fine tribute when the mother of a blind boy whom he had taught to swim said, " Mr. Ryder's untiring efforts have given our boy meaning and purpose in life to go on to other things."

Gus Ryder was honoured by having two pools named after him. The Sunnyside Pool, built in 1925, was renamed the Gus Ryder Sunnyside Pool. The War Memorial Pool, for which he organized the construction, became the Gus Ryder Pool.

For all the work he has done for swimming and swimmers, and with all the honour bestowed upon him, what he wished to be remembered for most were his accomplishments with disabled swimmers.

Mr. Gus Ryder passed away on May 23, 1991.