



Don Watson, Honor Coach, United States of America, 2013



Don on the left

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Don Watson coached IMSHOF Honorees John Kinsella and Sandra Bucha Kerscher as young pool swimmers and they later went on to win multiple key races in the 1970s. He trained under IMSHOF Honoree Dr. James “Doc” Counsilman at Indiana University and later led the program at Hinsdale (High School and community) in a small village outside of Chicago. Many of his swimmers went on to national and international stardom.

Don knew how to develop children into champions. He had his high school students competing against the best in the world in his heyday. Whether it was sitting in a boat dealing with rough conditions or early morning workouts, Don was there. He was a man his swimmers trusted and wanted to reward with very fast swim time. Often coaches who develop young athletes who then go off to college and beyond are not properly credited with their fundamental work. But Don was so good at what he did that his legacy was too large to ignore.

Don was also an accomplished marathon swimmer – winning the 35.4 km Mississippi River race in 1946, 1947 and 1948 when he set the record of 3 hours and 56 minutes.

He is also an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (2015).

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)