

Debbie Meyer (USA)



Training at the Arden Hills Swim Club in Sacramento, California, under Hall of Fame coach Sherm Chavoor, Debbie Meyer set training distance standards no girl before her had achieved and the results were spectacular. Over the course of her career, Meyer broke 20 world records in the 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m freestyle and was named "World Swimmer of the Year" by Swimming World Magazine's in 1967, 1968 and 1969.

In 1968, at the Olympic Games in Mexico City, the sixteen year old Meyer became the first swimmer, male or female, to win three individual gold medals in one Olympic meet and won the Sullivan Award as the top amateur athlete in the country.

There was nothing to speak of in terms of women's college swimming in the early 1970's, so Debbie enrolled at a local community college where she could continue to train for the 1972 Olympic Games with Chavoor. But her life was changing and the fun and excitement she had found early in her career weren't there. She retired in 1970.

"I probably would have kept swimming if Title IX had been around earlier," Meyer said.

In 1977, she was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame and in 1987 she became an inductee of the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame.

Today she competes in triathlons and Masters swim meets and since the mid 1990's has owned and operated the Debbie Meyer Swim School in Carmichael, California.

At the age of 13, Donna de Varona was the youngest member of the 1960 U.S. Olympic Swim Team. Four years later, she won two Olympic gold medals, in the 400m individual medley and in the 4x100 freestyle relay, at the Tokyo Olympic Games and was named the Associated Press and United Press International Female Athlete of the Year. After the 1964 Olympic Games she retired from competition because there were no opportunities to continue training at the collegiate level. She enrolled at UCLA and in 1965 she became the first female sportscaster at ABC under contract and may have been the first in the industry. Debuting at the age of 17, Donna's first assignment was the 1965 Men's AAU Swimming Championships alongside Jim McKay. Since then she has worked with various media outlets, covering 14 Olympics as host, co-host, special reporter and analyst.

Concern over the lack of athletic opportunities for women, de Varona became a leading advocate for Title IX and helped co-found the Women's Sports Foundation, serving as its first president.

She has received a number of awards during her broadcasting career, including an Emmy Award in 1991 for a Special Olympics feature she produced and an Emmy nomination for co-producing, writing and hosting "Keepers of the Flame" in 1998. In 2001, she received the Gracie Award from American Women in Radio and Television. In 2003, she received the Teddy Roosevelt Award, the highest honor of the NCAA.

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