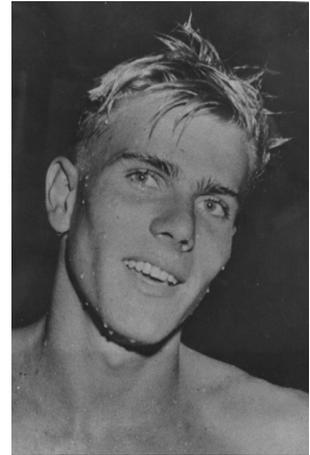


## Obituary: Murray Rose

January 6, 1939 – April 15, 2012

Gus Stager, coach of Michigan and the US Olympic team in 1960 called Murray Rose the greatest swimmer ever, even greater than Johnny Weissmuller. The legendary coach of Yale, Bob Kiphuth, concurred.



Growing up as an age group swimmer in the 1950s and early 1960s, my teammates and I agreed with that assessment. We had two swimming heroes: Johnny Weissmuller, whose Tarzan reruns were a mainstay of Saturday morning television and Australia's Murray Rose. But Johnny's days in the pool were ancient history and we were all too aware of his personal problems with women and wine. To our coaches and ourselves, Murray Rose embodied the Olympic ideal – blond, handsome, humble, a champion with good moral values – important in the 1950's – and a very cool accent. I'm also sure that the first time I heard the word "vegetarian" was in connection with him.

Although I lived in Philadelphia, whenever the AAU or NCAA championship meets came east to Yale's Payne Whitney Gymnasium, our team would make the trek to New Haven, Connecticut to see the stars of swimming. That is where I first saw Murray Rose in person. I'd see him again from a distance several times at the Hall of Fame, where he was both an inductee in the first class of honorees and co-announcer alongside Jack Whitaker for the CBS Sports spectacular – a gig he had for the first three years of the Hall of Fame International meet. As he is part of the DNA of Australian Swimming, he is also part of the DNA of American swimming and the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

Recently, I had a chance to watch some of the old 16mm films in our archives from those early Hall of Fame broadcasts. Unfortunately, these haven't been digitized yet, but will be soon so you can see them, but there are two films that we have converted and they confirmed my original impressions of Murray Rose – he was not only one of the immortals of Swimming history – but also one of the coolest. We will miss him – but also remember him forever at the Hall of Fame.

Bruce Wigo April 20, 2012

Video of the 1500m race of 1956

[http://www.ishof.org/video\\_archive/swimming/1956\\_1500m.htm](http://www.ishof.org/video_archive/swimming/1956_1500m.htm)

Video of Murray with Lloyd Bridges from a Drownproofing Film, circa 1964.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4H2TMktRIqQ>