



## Rebecca King

### My Journey and My Dream of Swimming

*Every swimmer has a story. Here's one of courage and determination that you shouldn't miss.*

I started my competitive years as a swimmer in 1985 as a 4-year-old at the Cut Off Youth Center in Lafourche Parish. The first year I didn't get much accomplished as I cried a lot and sat on the side of the pool deck afraid to jump off of the starting blocks. I was sure that the lane rope was my best friend and no one could tell me any different.



Rebecca King

Soon, I wanted more! I went from summer league swimming to a year-round swim team to the South Lafourche High School team, making it to the State Level and Top 8 each year.

I was no Dana Torres, Amanda Beard, or Michael Phelps. However, my love and passion

for competitive swimming and teaching others motivated me to continue pursuing my dream, college swimming.

Although things were going great in the water, no one knew of my struggles outside of the pool. I was constantly compensating for dyslexia that was diagnosed as a very young child. I had academic hurdles that were followed by two career-threatening shoulder injuries that resulted in right- and left-shoulder surgeries. I developed severe depression and an eating disorder.

While I was able to hide these conditions for some time, everything erupted my senior year of high school, just as I was trying to secure a position on a college team. Through all of the dark paths, I kept thinking *"If I keep my belief in God and myself, my dreams will come true!"*

The journey was difficult and frustrating for me and my family. At times I wished that I was some where else, *even if it were 6 feet under*. I considered suicide on more than one occasion. I had to keep reminding myself that if I were 6 feet under, I would not be able to fulfill my goals and make my dreams come true.

With my *"Never Give UP!"* attitude and a lot of hard work, I was accepted to Northeast Louisiana University (NLU/ULM) with a respected position on the swim team.

I pay tribute to my family, friends, coaches, and teachers for helping to make the seemingly impossible become a reality.

I swam four hard years at Northeast, was voted Team Captain and Most Spirited Swimmer, and made the Conference Team all four years, but once again, my swimming journey was not easy. I had a second shoulder surgery and my depression reoccurred.

I had hoped and prayed that these days were over, but I felt that I was reliving my senior year of high school. A dark thought persisted: "What if I can't ever swim again?" My family and friends were second-guessing my plans to keep swimming. They talked to me often about the risk of suffering a permanent injury. They told me that I was not a professional athlete. (In my mind, I thought that I was).

I went through physical therapy and decided that I was not going to let this surgery stop me from swimming for four years in college. Although they were concerned about me, my family was supportive. I went back to the pool and started pushing myself one more time. I made it to the Sun Belt Conference and came out with career best times.

### Special Points of Interests:

- > Rebecca King's Story
- > Upcoming Events
- > Summer and Water
- > Short Course Meet Photos
- > Team Contact Info

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*Master swimmers : We don't get old, we just age up.*

## Rebecca's Story Cont.:

When my college swimming days ended, I had to answer another question: "What do I do from here?" I had achieved another landmark in my journey, SUCCEEDED, by earning a degree in Exercise Physiology. But where would I go with my swimming career? I was no Olympian, so I went the path



> *"You never have to stop swimming."*

of many swimmers after their college career ends: I gained 25 lbs. But after all of the hard work and training I had accomplished, I decided I was not about to let myself get out of shape.

To continue my journey, I started running. But soon I realized that I missed the swimming in my life. I was watching my brother compete in a Triathlon and I thought, "I can do this!" Triathlon could be the next part of my journey. While watching my brother compete, I met someone from my swimming days who said, "Rebecca, why aren't you doing this?" When I said that I was afraid of the water, he thought that I was joking. I wasn't. I was really afraid of the Open Water. He told me that a group of Master Swimmers were training at UNO on a Masters Swim Team. I never knew that such a team existed. WOW! My true journey was about to get back on track.

In 2003, I started training for triathlons and masters swimming with swimmers that I could relate to and connect with on so many levels. I had never thought that I could be involved in programs beyond youth, high school, and college swimming. I thought swimming ended after college— unless you were that one in a million swimmer with the luck and talent to compete in the Olympics.

Swimmers, just make sure you are aware: ***"You never have to stop swimming."*** There is a level for everyone!

*Through all of the dark paths, I kept thinking "If I keep my belief in God and myself, my dreams will come true!"*

No, I will never make it to the Olympics, but I will swim the rest of my life. Each season is a new start, a new chapter of my swimming. I feel I have so many more years to live this dream.

There were so many times I did not want to go to practice or didn't want to swim in the cold, or miss the Friday Night Football game and bonfire or the sleep overs, or didn't want to wake up early. Often I have been tired of waking up with aches and pains and wanted to hang up the swim suits, turn in my fins, hand paddles, caps, and goggles. I can guarantee you that I ticked off my coach a few times.

But more than any of the above, I always wanted to swim and be the best that I could be. That desire drove me beyond my aches and pains and weaknesses. 26 years later, I am still in the water wearing a team cap. Swimming is a part of my life that no one can take away from me.

My journey has led me to complete two Ironman competitions and eight Half-Marathons. I have used my swimming drive to complete ten Marathons, two 50K runs and one 52 mile Ultra Marathon. I have qualified for Top 10 in US Masters for the past 6 years. I have earned: 2010 Outstanding Swimmer. I have now qualified for 2011 Masters Nationals, where I will represent all who helped me get to where I am today.

For the past few years I have coached swim teams at South Lafourche High School and Newman High, and been the head coach at Slidell High. I was also the Aquatics Director and a personal trainer at the Slidell Athletic Club. Five months ago I accepted a position at East Jefferson Hospital Wellness Center. I am a personal trainer, and I design and set up every swim program I can imagine, from teaching beginner swimmers to training all levels of athletes, including water safety classes at all levels.



I think I am in Heaven!!...I have truly been blessed. I want to end by sharing some thoughts with all of you:

2 brothers named Orville and Wilber had a dream about making man fly. You Fools cried the critics and non believers. Man ain't supposed to fly. But the fire burned strong inside their hearts that was fed by the fuel of their dreams.

***If you believe it you will achieve it.*** There is nothing in this world that you can't do. Believe it until your dreams come true. Mine have.

**Thank you and God bless you all.**

## Upcoming Events



*Master swimmers : We don't get old, we just age up.*



**Aug. 3-6 / LCM: USMS Long Course Nationals.**

**Auburn AL**

**Aug. 20/ Pentathlon: Crawfish Aquatics in Lafayette**



## Summer and the Water: Some Thoughts

Many of us grew up in, on, and around the water— pools, lakes, bayous, the Gulf. Surrounded by so much water in so many forms, we sometimes take for granted that water is not our natural habitat. As the weather heats up, we and our families will head to the water for recreation. Because we spend so much time in the water, others will look to us as role models. And, too often, we will take it for granted that our water skills will keep us and our loved ones safe. Yet each summer, the drowning tragedies continue. Let's take a few minutes to think about safety for ourselves and our loved ones.

1. Encourage everyone to learn to swim, and to keep learning. Don't give up if a non-swimmer isn't happy about lessons— swimming is an essential life skill, and increasing the safety of our loved ones should not be optional. We don't let kids cry their way out of school, do we?
2. Lessons are a starting point, not an end. Time in the water is essential to reinforcing swim lessons and building solid water skills. Summer league teams are great training for strong swimmers, but don't ignore the benefits of family time in the water. Play-time with the little ones should include work (disguised as fun, Junebe) on swimming skills.
3. Everyone is at risk on the water. Everyone. No one can predict all the things that can go wrong on the water, from collisions with other swimmers to sudden cramps to heart attacks. Supervise your swimmers. Don't swim alone. Use life jackets.



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## Pat's Corner

There's a new kid on the blocks— and she'll be doing the next few newsletters.

Pat Morgan, Master's swimmer since 2010 and competitive swimmer never, will be gathering and sending news.

As a newbie, I don't have much instinctive feel for what to put in this space. Please weigh in with ideas— what would you like to know about? What regular features would be useful to you? What kinds of links or info do you need?

Send ideas and suggestions (and yes, I take criticism) to [morganink@cox.net](mailto:morganink@cox.net)

Ann sent some requests out that I will repeat below— take a few minutes to make this your publication. And don't every worry about saying things just right— I will always edit for style and spelling (can't help it— I'm a retired English teacher).



### A note to all teams.

What's happening with your team? Send articles to: [morganink@cox.net](mailto:morganink@cox.net)

We would like to feature a club coach in each issue. Swimmers, you can nominate your coach for the spotlight! Tell me who and how to contact, and I'll track down information and pictures. Old faces and new ones are welcome! **Send to: [morganink@cox.net](mailto:morganink@cox.net)**

Join us on Facebook—**Crawfish Aquatics Masters**

**Every Swimmer Has a Story**— and a dream, and a journey. What's yours? What have you learned along the way? Someone needs what you have learned—share a little or a lot. Let's grow and learn together. Send ideas about your journey, or nominate someone else for a feature in this space to Pat Morgan at [morganink@cox.net](mailto:morganink@cox.net)

**Southern Masters Swimming** organizes Masters swim teams from Louisiana and Mississippi. We are proud of all of our swimmers. We are constantly growing and improving. Find a team in your area and join today.

**Invite all unattached swimmers to affiliate with your team.** We want all competitive swimmers to be attached to a club and Southern Masters Swimmers. We can build a stronger team for national and regional meets.

[www.southernmastersswimming.com](http://www.southernmastersswimming.com)



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**SMS Teams—contact them when you are traveling:**

*BTAC— Bengal Tiger Aquatic Club Masters*  
5261 Highland Road Suite 324  
Baton Rouge, La 70808  
Missy Wiseman—225-578-5078  
office@swimtaq.com

*CCSC— Crescent City Swim Club*  
964 Athania  
Metairie, La 70001  
Mike Falati—504-838-9384  
ccsnola@aol.com

*CRAQ—Crawfish Aquatics Masters*  
7150 Bluebonnet Blvd.  
Baton Rouge, La 70810  
Nan Fontenot—225-769-4323  
masters@crawfishaquatics.com

*CROS— Cross Gates Family Fitness*  
200 N Military Road  
Slidell, La 70461  
Cece Dugas— 985-285-7946  
ceceswim@juno.com

*ES—Elmwood Sharks*  
1200 S. Clearview Pkwy Suite 1200  
Harahan, LA 70123  
George Rucker— 504-994-9911  
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*FFF— Flowwood Fighting Flounders*  
1645 Piedmont St.  
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Kate S. Eidt—601-355-5831

*Franco's Fins Masters*  
100 Bon Temps Roule  
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*Frank's Master Gators*  
PO Box 1519  
Houma, La 70361  
Frank Shepard—985-851-7665  
fswim@hotmail.com

*PAC— Pelican Athletic Club*  
1170 Meadowbrook Drive  
Mandeville, La 70471  
Charlie Hoolihan— 985-626-3706  
Charlie@thepac.com

*RRM— Red River Masters*  
620 Prospect #3  
Shreveport, La 71104  
Janet Martin—318-226-9592

*RTM—Riptide Masters*  
116 Frenchmen Dr.  
Mandeville, La 70448  
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coachjudith@riptideswimclub.org

*Shockwave Masters*  
106 Andrew Circle  
Tupelo, MS 38801  
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**Short Course Yards meet held at Crawfish Aquatics**

