

## DAWN MUSSELMAN INSPIRATIONAL SWIMMER 2013

The Pacific Northwest Association Local Masters Swimming Committee proudly presents the 2013 Dawn Musselman Inspirational Swimmer Award to

### **Rick Colella**

Rick, your humble, disciplined approach to swimming and to life – not to mention your Lake Washington Masters teammates' perseverance – has earned your selection as this year's Inspirational Swimmer.

You began swimming PNA Masters almost from its inception, with standing records to prove it. After a break, you returned to swimming with a small group at Juanita Aquatic Center. Coach Becca Watson notes that people would come and go, but "Rick's swimming friends" continued to grow. "As a newcomer to the Pacific Northwest, anytime I spoke about starting a Lake Washington Masters team, the response was always, 'Oh, the Rick Colella group?' Everyone knew who this humble, soft-spoken guy was! When I asked the group to trust and follow me (and I will never forget it!), Rick basically said 'I swam without a coach for 20 years, so let's see what I can do with a coach for the next 20.' He gave me, the new kid, a 20-year tryout! Who does that? Luckily for me, the rest of the group quickly followed."

Of the many nicknames Becca has heard bestowed upon you during her short tenure, the one she thinks most appropriate is "Godfather of Pacific Northwest Swimming." Teammate Jay Pearson says "Rick's been an inspiration to me since I was a little kid swimming on the Totem Lake Swim Team and he and his sister Lynn were on our team as Olympics medalists. At first, I could hardly believe I was getting to swim with him as a Masters swimmer, but he is so humble that I was quickly at my ease. Watching him perform his best effort at every workout (not to mention the incredible shape he keeps his body) is a constant inspiration. I also became inspired to really learn how to swim breaststroke well. He is always willing to give advice when asked!"

In addition to your humble leadership in the pool and locker room, you have also inspired the community through the work you and your wife Terry have done in founding *Friends of FSH Research*, which seeks a cure for the debilitating disease that affects your son Brian. Jay notes that many teammates attend the annual FSH auction every year (taking four tables this year!) because of the respect and love they have for you.

Bruce Deakyne concludes, "If it weren't for Rick's passion for the sport and ability to motivate others, I don't think I and many others would consider the sport such an important part of our lives."

Rick, for your inspiration to the entire membership of the Pacific Northwest Association of Masters Swimmers by your example of good sportsmanship, encouragement and commitment, the PNA is proud to recognize you as our Dawn Musselman Inspirational Swimmer for 2013.

For the PNA Board:

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Lisa Dahl, President

For the Selection Committee:

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Steve Peterson, Selection Committee Chair

