

Remembering Dot . . . given in memorial May 21, 2000, by Nancy Ridout

Well, she's done it again. Dot has brought us all together to celebrate life.

I spent much of the 5+ hours it took me to fly here from San Francisco, thinking about Dot – what she meant to me and what she meant to the organization to which she essentially devoted the last 25 years of her life - United States Masters Swimming.

It is an honor, not a duty as President of this organization, to represent here today the depth of appreciation we feel for Dot – her loss cannot be measured.

For over 20 years Dot WAS USMS. She was the person who communicated the benefits of our program to the public and to the membership. She gave out information, she answered endless questions, kept our records, and kept us in line by keeping in touch with virtually everyone who had responsibilities, and was “on call” 16 hours a day. She was good at her job and generally indispensable.

I thought about how long it had been since I'd picked up the phone and heard “Masters swimming, Dorothy Donnelly”. She and I ate up a chunk of Masters nickels with our phone conversations, but they never failed to leave me laughing and in a better frame of mind. Dot had that gift which all of us here have shared.

No conversation ended without a reference or a tidbit about her family – Jerianne, Brian and Zack. She was so proud of you and so thankful for the blessing of her family.

Dot was a competitor as well as someone who “gave back”. She was an Olympian. She was a standard of excellence for her competitors throughout her Masters swimming career as her many records attest. I remember in my younger days – and one's perspective does change! – seeing Dot in a race of “older” women at Nationals and thinking “Wow! She is really racing!”

Dot may have been of an older generation but she had vision and was thoroughly modern. With the advent of computers, she dived right in and was among the first to make use of their potential in running our programs.

Last summer I saw yet another need for Dot's talents. Before it was too late, I thought it was essential to capture our history. I could think of no better person than Dot to administer this important and monumental task. Though weak from chemotherapy, she was delighted to be asked and excited about the possibilities. And she did organize a group of hard working, dedicated volunteers who have been THE most active committee in USMS this year. In fact, I was going to give her committee an award for their extraordinary accomplishments in just 1 year at our annual convention. She will not be there this year, in person, but she will be there in the hearts of all those privileged to have known her.

Dot faced what life gave her with a positive attitude and a sense of humor. She had a gift for making all those with whom she had contact feel special. Dot was special.

On behalf of the many in Masters swimming who loved Dot but could not be here today, and personally, thank you Dot for your friendship, your guidance, your support, and your love. You did with your life that which all of us hope to do, you helped to make this world a better place. It has been a privilege and our good fortune to have been your colleague and your friend.