

September 1, 2024

Dear Mr. Bill Blackwell,

It is a privilege and an honor to recommend Coach Ronnie Mayers for consideration for the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame. I have known Coach Mayers for over 40 years and I feel he is a very deserving candidate for the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame. I say he is the "Father of Mississippi Swimming" as he established and developed Mississippi swimming programs on the age-group level as well as on the collegiate level. Throughout his career, Coach Mayers enjoyed great success as he instructed, developed, and coached swimmers of all abilities and at all levels of this competitive sport.

Coach Mayers was instrumental, along with Dr. Kent Wyatt, in starting the Delta State Swimming and Diving program in 1985. In the fall of 1987, Coach Mayers had one scholarship which he used to bring four girls, including myself into his program. From there, he grew and developed the most successful collegiate swimming program in the history of Mississippi while serving as head coach at Delta State University (DSU) from 1984 to 2005.

He received many accolades during the 21 years he was head coach at DSU including leading the DSU swimming team to 11 New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference (NSISC) Championship titles. He was named NSISC Coach of the Year 14 times. He has an overall men's dual meet record of 108-83 and an overall women's dual meet record of 148-73. Under his coaching expertise, his program produced 56 individual All-Americans and 113 individual conference champions, including 17 diving titles. His teams have made 15 NCAA Division II National Championship appearances. He had 114 men and 112 women named to All Conference Teams. One of his swimmers, Keith Salter, qualified and competed in the 1989 World Games for the Deaf. In 1999, he coached swimmer Mandy Lee who was named Mississippi NCAA Woman of the Year. He also coached his first ever NCAA champion, Justin Whitaker, in 2002. For all of his contributions to age group and collegiate swimming programs, Coach Mayers received the United States Swimming Phillips Award for distinctive service to Mississippi Swimming in 1993 and it is no surprise that DSU welcomed Coach Mayers into its 2007 Hall of Fame Class.

Coach Mayers was not only successful in the pool, but he was also instrumental in encouraging his student athletes to reach their potential in the classroom. He coached 15 Academic All Americans. Coach Mayers had 108 women and 67 men named to New South Intercollegiate Swim Conference All Academic Teams. Currently, he has 18 swimmers inducted into the Delta State Sports Hall of Fame and six inducted into the Delta State Student Hall of Fame. He had five female and three male swimmers receive the DSU Kerg Senior Athlete of the Year award, the highest accolade a DSU athlete can receive. He graduated 81% of the student athletes who were in his program. With Coach Mayers' continued emphasis on success and accountability in the classroom, his 2002 men's team was awarded highest GPA honors in all of NCAA Division II Swimming.

Ronnie Mayers is not only a successful coach and developer of student athletes, but he is also a visionary. In 1992, he began a quest to build a state of the art aquatic center. He led the campaign from its inception to its completion in 2001. He worked tirelessly with DSU administration, legislators, alumni, and students on this project. He also supervised the daily construction of the aquatic center as it was being built. The DSU Aquatics Center, now named the Ronald G. Mayers Aquatics Center, is still regarded as one of the finest competition pools at any level in the nation.

Considering all of his accolades and accomplishments during his successful career, I humbly ask for your consideration in selecting Coach Ronnie Mayers, "The Father of Mississippi Swimming," into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame.

Fondly,

Susanne Mims Blalock
DSU Swimmer 1987-1991