

## U.S. Masters Swimming

**Committee Name:** Recognition & Awards

**Committee Chair:** Elizabeth Nymeyer

**Minutes recorded by:** Sally Dillon

**Date/time of meeting:** January 28, 2024, 6 pm CST

**Actions taken:** None

**Number of committee members present:** XX

**Absent:** XX

**Guests:** XX

**Present:** Rich Burns (PC), Hill Carrow (NC), Sally Dillon (PN), Sara Dunn (NC), Jessie Feng (NE), Theresa Frias (SP), Caitlin Gagnon (OH), Michael Hillegonds (IL), Nancy Kryka (FL), Tara Mack (NE), Ann Marshfield (LE), Michael Moore (PC), Sonny Nguyen (NC), Ray Novitske (PV), Elizabeth Nymeyer (MN), and Nancy Ridout (PC). Crystie McGrail (VPLO).

Beth Nymeyer called the meeting to order at 6 pm Central time.

1. Beth reported that USMS President Ed Coates has updated her on the situation with MISHOF and our committee's concerns that a 2023 contributor has not been selected (R&A nominated Nadine Day). Ed will be meeting with USMS CEO Dawson Hughes and the MISHOF representative on February 9, and will get back to us when he has more information. Ed also wants the R&A committee to review the Ransom J. Arthur award timeline. The USMS Executive Committee wants the RJA award time frame to match the other awards in 2025. For 2024, he has said that there will not be a recognition of the RJA recipient at nationals, and the R&A committee needs to develop a plan. The RJA subcommittee will need to make recommendations.
2. Member Introductions: Beth welcomed committee members, old and new! Each member stated their LMSC and favorite food.
3. VPLO Report: I Chrystie reported that Grown Up Swimming is now part of USMS, and we need to get acquainted with the program. The board has formed two task forces. The Elections Task Force is looking for more tech savvy procedures. The other task force is focusing Transgender considerations. Chrystie reiterated that the board desires a July 1 submission for the RJA award nominations and the elimination of the award announcement at nationals. She asked the committee to look at all awards categories, and the physical awards that are given. She would like a project timeline for committee activities and leadership, along with documentation. Beth noted there are more goals that she will be adding as we go through the agenda.
4. Approval of Minutes: The October 15, 2023 meeting minutes were approved via email and have been posted to the USMS website.
5. Next R&A committee meeting: March 10, 2024.
6. Subcommittee Reports
  - a. Ransom J Arthur Award (RJA): Michael Moore (chair), and previous RJA recipients Hill, Sally, and Nancy R. Michael noted the procedures, which include collecting the nominations and sending

the materials to the voters. Voters include all members of the R&A committee, and all former RJA recipients (must be current USMS members). The issue of when/how the 2024 award is presented is TBD; the subcommittee will meet to provide options and present them to the R&A committee at the next meeting.

- b. June Krauser Communication Award (JKC): Nancy Ridout (chair) noted that the award is given to a person or group who has made significant contributions and/or innovations locally, or broader. Adjustments to the application form have been made to help nominators focus their responses. Selection committee members vary from year and include members from three other USMS committees.
- c. Dorothy Dot Donnelly Service Award (DDSA): Nancy Kryka (chair) explained that the award is presented to a maximum of 15 USMS individuals whose volunteer service has contributed at the local, regional, and or national level. 21 members were nominated in 2023. Beth would like to see the development of a rubric to assist in the selection process. The selection committee is comprised of the USMS President, R&A chair, vice chair, and two other R&A committee members. Beth noted that Nancy K. is in the Minnesota Masters Hall of Fame.
- d. Club of the Year: Mike Hillegonds (chair) noted that future awards will not include “regional” or “local” wording. Mike said that the toughest part is getting nominations, as he has not received more than 3 in his two years of involvement. The 7-person selection committee has included members of the Coaches and Fitness committees, which now requires a change to the policies since the Fitness Committee has been dissolved. He encouraged new members to join his subcommittee.
- e. Fitness Award: Beth noted that she forgot to include this topic on the agenda. Sally proposed that the R&A committee take on the responsibility for the USMS Fitness Award. If approved, we would need a new subcommittee chair and members. They would review current procedures and recommend changes for approval at our next meeting. Sally noted that a precedent to take on another award was set several years ago when the USMS Communications Committee was dissolved, and R&A adopted the Communications award that they were presenting. Ann spoke about the history of the Fitness award and the difficulty the Fitness committee recently had in getting information about previous recipients (so stories can be posted). She also expressed concern about getting nominations, saying that their efforts to distribute a graphic encouraging nominations was not allowed.

Ray noted that Ed Coates wants R&A to review all the awards to see if they should continue. He asked: “is this one of them?”. Chrystie would like to see if there is enough difference from the other awards. Beth suggested we move this topic to the March meeting to review the data. She will solicit more information. Nancy R noted that we went back and forth about the DEI award and the award has since opened her eyes. She said that if USMS is 80% Fitness; the award could continue to be a very good thing. Chrystie needs a rational reason for the Fitness award to continue. A subcommittee will discuss further. Sally (lead), Ray, Ann, Theresa.

- f. Award Bios: The subcommittee writes stories about award winners by pulling information from nomination documents and/or speeches. Ray is looking for people to join the group who consider themselves “good writers”. Sally and Nancy K do most of the writing and edit each other. Ray sometimes edits and he posts the finished stories. Ray has contacted all other award giving committees this past year and only the Coaches Committee has provided stories. If the other committees are unable to move forward, Ray’s willing to provide help. The oldest awards (not governed by the R&A committee) are the most difficult stories to obtain. Ray suggests that we could assist the other award giving committees to find information about their award recipients so stories can be written.
- g. Masters International Swimming Hall of Fame (MISHOF). Discussed earlier, but Beth said we will roll over same subcommittee from 2023. We’re in a holding pattern until ISHOF makes the necessary decisions. Rich noted that he and Sally received a message saying that the National Office will take this on for the time being. Beth noted that we still need a subcommittee if we are going to continue to nominate candidates.
- h. Creating a "Best Award Practices" document: Beth said the goal is to share it with other committees that give awards. This ties into the webinar, but she has found out that a webinar is not scheduled after all (due to lack of interest). Beth is looking for a “help” document for submitting nominations. Let her know if you want to be on the subcommittee.
- i. Social Media and Direct Outreach Subcommittee: Beth explained that posts promoting awards are created and the committee personally reaches out to LMSCs and individuals. A new ad will be developed for Swimmer Magazine in 2024. She will start a new outreach document for 2024.
- j. Award Video for Annual Meeting: Beth asked for volunteers to learn from Ray, so he doesn’t have to make the annual award video another 10 years! Ray gave the project’s history – It started with a slide for someone not present. Since Covid hit, the slides have become a video and it’s been very popular. Ed has asked Ray to provide details about how he does it so it can be kept within the committee and not end up as a National Office task. Beth would like other volunteers to contribute. Crystie said the national office would like the video to be USMS-branded better so it could be distributed broadly. Can we partner with the national office staff to provide clips so it can be seen on a broader scale. Beth noted that Caitlin works with Miami U doing social media and digital marketing. She has a good handle on what might be posted. She thinks our award video would easily adaptable. Ray looks forward to Caitlin’s help!
- k. USMS Community forums: Crystie wants subcommittees to have discussions in Community. She noted that the only people on the R&A community will be our members. Others USMS members have no access to our group. She offered to do a tutorial and Beth offered to start a conversation to get committee members involved. Subscription to the committee’s forum is necessary.

Beth asked if anyone objected to her sharing their information on the committee roster and there were no objections.

Beth noted that Tara is her LMSC's awards chair. Tara has good information to share. Beth would be interested in seeing the form they use, noting that R&A has a Google Form.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm Central time.