

# Betty Lorenzi's Swimming Accomplishments

By Meegan Wilson

Betty Shields Lorenzi passed away on March 2, 2023 at the age of 95 after leading an extraordinary life. She will be missed. Betty discovered swimming in high school and swam for the Women's Association in New York City from the ages of 14 - 21. She tried out for the 1948 Olympics, but did not qualify. After that, she started participating in synchronized swimming or water ballet in Elliott Murphy's Aquashow in New York. She continued in aqua shows when she moved to the Dominican Republic where she met her husband, Henri Lorenzi. Henri was in the hotel business and they moved around for a while and finally landed in Wisconsin. It wasn't until 1998, at the age of 70, that Betty registered with United States Masters Swimming, USMS, and started competing with the Wisconsin Masters Aquatic Club, WMAC. She immediately began placing in the USMS Top Ten rankings and the World Masters Top Ten rankings in her age group. In 2008 she discovered Florida swimming and joined the Florida Aquatic Combined Team, FACT.

Betty placed in the World Masters Top Ten rankings from 1998 – 2009 and from 2012-2018. Swimming freestyle and backstroke she received forty nine 1<sup>st</sup> place world rankings from 2002 – 2017.

In 2002, when she was 75, she competed at the World Masters Championships in Christchurch, New Zealand and placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the 100 and 200 Meter backstrokes. At the 2004 World Championships in Riccione, Italy she placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the 50 and 100 Meter backstrokes. When she turned 80 she started setting World Records and set 8 in Long Course Meters and 9 in Short Course Meters from 2007 – 2017.

Betty also placed in the USMS Top Ten and received All American status every year from 1998 to 2019. She set 13 USMS National Records in the 80-84 age group, 16 in the 85-89 age group, and 10 in the 90-94 age group. Twenty eight of those records are currently held today. She also had 8 Lifetime relay records and five are still held today. Three relay records were set swimming with FACT members Edwin Graves, Joan Campbell, and John Course in the 200, 400 and 800 SCM freestyle in the 360-399 age group in 2016 and 2017. In 2009, one was set in the 200 Women's 75+ SCY Medley with FACT members Sylvia Eisele, Nancy Durstein and Mary Tusa, and one was set in the 320-359 LCM Women's 200 Medley with FACT members Eisele, Durstein and Campbell. In 2008, Betty and her teammates, Joan Campbell and Nancy Durstein, set a Long Distance National Record in the one hour 75+ postal relay swimming a total of 9,230 yards. In 2010 Betty set an individual record in the 1 Hour Postal swim in the 80-84 age group swimming 3250 yards.

On Christmas Day, 2014, Betty had an unfortunate accident and broke her neck. At the 2016 Florida LMSC Awards Social, Betty received the Sue Moucha Overcoming Adversity Award for her work and perseverance to start swimming and competing again.

In 2018, *Swimming World Magazine* recognized her as one of the 2017 Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year. She was recognized at the 2018 United States Aquatic Swimming Convention in Jacksonville during the International Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

Special thanks to Walt Reed for compiling Betty's World Masters swimming accomplishments and to USMS for archiving her United States Masters Swimming accomplishments.



**Betty, receiving the 2015 Sue Moucha Overcoming Adversity Award from Sue.**