

Captain Ransom J. Arthur, MD, Award
Anna Lea Matysek's Acceptance Speech
September 16, 2022 - Denver, Colorado

I would first like to thank the people who submitted my nomination for this award, Nancy Kryka, Meegan Wilson, and Anthony Thompson. I know they spent a lot of time working on the nomination packet and I'm very grateful that they did so. It is a tremendous honor.

My story is probably the same as all of yours. I started swimming with a Masters team in Kansas City in 1987. It didn't take long for my teammates to convince me to swim in a meet. One teammate, Mike Calwell, had been involved in both running meets and in the LMSC. In 1989 when the LMSC needed a registrar, he talked me into doing the job. I took that over, which also included being the LMSC treasurer. This was back in the days when the registration forms were mailed to me and I typed each membership card one by one in my typewriter.

Mike was a great recruiter and got a number of us involved with running meets. By 1991, he suggested that I be the meet director for that year's Breadbasket Zone meet. Mike and his wife, Laura, had been the Missouri Valley delegates to the annual convention for the past few years. In 1993, Mike convinced me to attend the convention, which was held in Los Angeles, as our LMSC's delegate.

I agreed, not fully understanding what I was getting into.

At the 1993 convention I was amazed at the organization, the complexity, and the amount of work that was being done by a devoted group of volunteers. From the committee meetings the first couple of days, to the detailed legislation and rules proposals, to the way the meeting minutes were written, printed, and delivered under our hotel doors each night, to the decorum and the adherence to Robert's Rules of Order in the House of Delegates, I was flabbergasted that this entire organization was being run by these volunteers who were so devoted to their sport and to promoting its growth.

I attended many more conventions after that and realized that I was learning as much from this organization as I was giving. The entire structure was modeled after our federal government. I now understood what "House committees" and "Senate committees" were. I learned leadership skills by watching committee chairs and by listening in the House of Delegates. Thanks to Bill Tingley and Jim Wheeler, I knew Robert's Rules better than I ever probably wanted to.

All of that learning, and the leadership skills, benefited me throughout my work career. Understanding our Rule Book and the structure and function of our bylaws, and the LMSCs' bylaws, allowed me to hit the ground running when I became a board member of another nonprofit. The same goes for my time spent on my HOA's board.

It was such a privilege for me, and for all of us, I'm guessing, to play such an integral role in the growth and development of USMS. We really were the people running the organization. I don't think most of us will ever have the opportunity to contribute so much to a nonprofit as volunteers, with the amount of responsibility that we all carried in our roles.

There are so many people that I would like to acknowledge, but I'm afraid to do so because I know I would leave someone out. So I'm only going to mention one person and that's Mike Calwell, who passed away in 2019. One of Mike's many "claims to fame" was that he taught Gale Sayers how to swim when they were both students at the University of Kansas and the school required every student to pass a swim class to graduate. As I mentioned earlier, Mike was the person who got me involved in all of this and I wish he could be here to see me accept this award.