

Kingsley Bugarin OAM

The Western Australian Swimming Association is delighted you are here tonight to witness and to celebrate this, the 3rd induction into the Swimming WA Hall of Legends.

As you may already know, our Hall of Legends is a rarefied space, designed and set aside to accommodate only the rarest of tenants - the best of the best in our sport.

Our newest inductee deserves no less than this ... no less than being granted legend status – not just for excelling in the world of Multi Class swimming, but for elevating the overall quality of his sport both in terms of the keenness of the contest and the spirit in which it occurs.

Kingsley Haldane Bugarin OAM – or *Biggles* as he is known to his friends due to his interest in aviation - was born on the 3rd of August 1968 in Mount Lawley and attended La Salle College in Perth.

The young Bugarin began his sporting life, actually; on dry land, competing as a track and field athlete. He didn't take up competitive swimming until he was 14, when, in his words:

"The Association for the Blind dragged me along to a swimming session and I took it from there."

We're very grateful that they did. For, in a swimming career spanning five Paralympic Games and taking in numerous National and International meets, Bugarin managed to gather a staggering 155 medals across several swimming disciplines.... with close to half of those medals won in international competition!

Kingsley Bugarin began his swimming training with the Swan Hills Swimming Club in Midvale. During the late 90's - in the lead up to the Sydney Paralympics - Bugarin moved to Claremont Uni-Swim Swimming Club to train with Matt Brown at both the UWA Aquatic Centre and the, then called, Challenge Stadium.

From the time he started swimming at age 14, Kingsley Bugarin's extraordinary talent was noticed and marked for development. Within two years of being dragged to his first swimming session, that same boy, now 16, was standing on the podium at the New York Paralympics.

Over the years, Bugarin has had some of this country's best mentors including George Brown, Steve Pitcher and Matt Brown guiding him in his training and driving him to produce superlative results in his racing.

Their efforts and the efforts of others including those of the Australian Institute of Sport, which supported Bugarin through a scholarship in the late 90's, certainly paid off:-

From the New York Paralympics of 1984 through to those at Sydney 2000, Bugarin – swimming across Breaststroke, Freestyle, Butterfly and Individual Medley - brought home five Gold Medals, 8 Silver and 6 Bronze. And, at the Atlanta Paralympics of 1996, he not only won Gold for Australia in the 200 metres S12 Breaststroke, he set a new World Record that still stands today - some 23 years later.

Kingsley Bugarin retired from the competitive pool after the Sydney Paralympics and today spends much of his time pursuing a new goal:- that of being the best that he can be as an Open Water Swimmer and as a Triathlete.... both of which he enjoys with his wife Yari. Kingsley and Yari even *ran* down the aisle, literally, to marry during the run leg of the 2014 Busselton Ironman!

In 1996, Kingsley Bugarin was honoured to receive the Order of Australia Medal for outstanding service to the country and to humanity.

In the year 2000, he was awarded an Australian Sports Medal and on 2008 was formally inducted into the Western Australian Swimming Association's Hall of Fame.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating Kingsley Bugarin, our 3rd member of the Swimming WA Hall of Legends.

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