

2018 Westpac Swimmer of the Year Awards

Swimming WA Hall of Legends Induction

Inductee: 2

Name: Lyn McClements

The Western Australian Swimming Association is delighted to induct the 2nd inductee into the Swimming WA Hall of Legends. The Swimming WA Hall of Legends is designed to recognise the best of the best and tonight's second inductee fits that description to a tee.

Lynette Velma McClements was born in May 1951 and grew up in Perth where she surfed and swam often. A natural athlete, she was a latecomer to the stroke that brought her glory; butterfly. McClements was an asthmatic, who took up swimming to relieve her ailment. Originally concentrating on the freestyle and backstroke, she switched to butterfly in the mid-1960s.

In State Junior Championships, under the coaching of Harry Kelly, she tackled freestyle and backstroke events, and at one stage concentrated on the 400m freestyle. After that distance proved too wearing, she applied herself to sprints, particularly in freestyle and backstroke.

After a flirtation with the medley, in which she found she handled the butterfly well, she competed in the junior nationals of 1966/67 in freestyle and butterfly.

In May 1967, at just 16 years of age, she joined the squad of another Perth coach, Kevin Duff, and concentrated on the butterfly. Only a year before the Olympics, McClements was almost ready to retire from competitive swimming, when her uncle Les McClements, a professional Australian rules football player convinced her otherwise and we are forever grateful that he did.

Within a year Lyn won the State and National 100m butterfly titles, and was selected for the 1968 Mexico Australian Olympic team. Lyn went to Mexico very much as an outsider, unmentioned by Australian sportswriters among the possible medalists.

In the 4×100-metre medley relay, she combined with Lynne Watson, Judy Playfair and Janet Steinbeck to claim silver behind the United States team. McClements had put Australia in the lead during the butterfly leg, but Steinbeck was overhauled by Susan Shields in the anchor freestyle leg.

McClements was said to be lacking confidence prior to the 100-metre butterfly, until the Australian Men's captain Michael Wenden pulled her aside in an attempt to coax her into believing that she could win. She relegated the American pair of Ellie Daniel and Susan Shields into the minor medals and world record-holder Ada Kok to fourth, posting a time of 1 minute 5.5 seconds. It was an enormously satisfying result as the Australians bettered the Olympic record, and each girl broke the Australian record in her stroke!

Lyn surprised everyone in the Olympic Final of the 100m butterfly by taking the lead as she surfaced from her dive, and leading all the way to win in 1 min 5.5 seconds from the two (2) Americans. Lyn McClements became the first Australian woman to win an Olympic Gold medal in the butterfly stroke and was the only Gold medal won by the Australian women's team in Mexico City.

In 1969, McClements won both the 100-metre and 200-metre butterfly titles at the Australian Championships. However, the following year, she was disqualified after being deemed to be using an illegal stroke. After being overlooked for selection for the 1970 Commonwealth Games, she retired.

Her daughter, Jacqueline McKenzie (Lamb), represented Australia at the 1992 Summer Olympics in the 200-metre and 400-metre individual medley.

Lyn's career may have been short lived, but her legacy still remains. Her contribution to the sport of swimming has been recognized nationwide. From teaching youngsters to swim to being active member of the Western Australian swimming community, her stature as the State's preeminent butterflyer remains today.

In 1991, Lyn was inducted into Sport of Australia's Hall of Fame where she will forever be memorialized as one of swimming's great successes. In 2008, she was inducted into the Swimming WA Hall of Fame.

Today, Lyn remains the only able body competitive swimmer from Western Australia to win an individual Gold medal at an Olympic Games.

Ladies and gentlemen, please stand as we induct the 2nd member of the Swimming Hall of Legends, Lyn McClements.