

Suzanne Kwasny-Ritchie

Birth Name: Kwasny

Community: Thunder Bay

Induction Sport: Swimming, Rowing

Induction Year: 1995

Biography

From the moment this exceptional athlete dove into the pool in 1973 with the Thunder Bay Thunderbolts Swim Club, she started a career which would include achievements at the national and world level. After just one year with the Bolts, Suzanne was breaking provincial records and garnering first place honours for her club, which she continued to do up until her retirement in 1980.

In 1975 she claimed a silver medal at the British national swimming championships in what was fast becoming her speciality, the 200m backstroke. At the Canadian Olympic Swimming trials in 1976, although recording the fastest 200m backstroke time in the world by a 13-year old that year, she narrowly missed a spot on the Olympic team. In 1978 she claimed a silver and bronze at the Canadian Championships and was named to the women's team for the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, winning her heat in the 200m backstroke and breaking the previous Games record. In the finals she placed 4th and earned the right to represent Canada at the World Championships where she placed 10th amongst the world's best. At the Coca-Cola International meet in England, against swimmers from 15 countries, she came away with a silver and bronze.

In 1979 Suzanne represented Canada at the Pan American Games, putting in a 4th place showing and earned a silver medal at the Canadian Championships that year. Attending Lakehead University in 1980, Suzanne continued to compete in swimming, being named Female Rookie Athlete of the Year and representing her school with distinction at CIAU events.

In 1980 Suzanne turned her attention above the water line, joining the Thunder Bay Rowing Club. Her talents contributed to numerous victories for the club between 1983 and 1986, including the 1983 Women's Sr., Double Sculls and 1986 Women's Lightweight Fours at the Canadian Nationals, 7 gold medals at Northwestern International Rowing Association regattas and 3 silver medals at the Royal Canadian Henley.

Inducted into the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame, September 30, 1995

