

ILMSA Application Procedure for The Bill Mulliken Legends Award

In 2012, ILMSA established The Bill Mulliken Legends Award, the first recipient being Bill Mulliken for being the founder of the *Big Shoulders 5K swim*.

The Big Shoulders 5K Swim: a Lake Michigan-size test of guts, determination and fortitude amidst the chilly, windswept waves. Like all the best races in the world, Big Shoulders started with an inspired individual who had an inspired idea. Founded in 1990 by Olympic Gold Medal winner ('60 Rome breaststroke) Bill Mulliken, Big Shoulders has grown to be one of the premier open-water races in the United States.

Mulliken saw the City of Chicago, known for its tough but endearing demeanor, rugged work ethic and soaring skyline, as an unconventional but ideal spot for an open water swimming race. Captured as the "City of Big Shoulders" by the poet Carl Sandburg, Chicago is blessed to reside at the foot of one of the fresh water marvels of the world, Lake Michigan. When you put an accomplished and capable man such as Bill Mulliken together with such an ample resource, you know something good will come of it.

As Bill is fond of saying, "Big Shoulders is the world's most architecturally significant race." He gathered together the right allies and picked the ideal spot at the foot of the Hancock Tower starting on Ohio Street beach. Serving as a fundraiser for Chicago Masters and UIC Swim teams, Big Shoulders began as a roughwater 5K challenge of unparalleled stature in the midwest. With the backing of the legendary Joe Pecoraro, Captain of the Chicago Parks District lifeguards, as well as the regard of Bill's business colleagues in the city, Big Shoulders launched with a handful of the heartiest and most adventurous open water swimmers in the area. A local celebration of the city skyline had begun, and the message was delivered: Lake Michigan is ready for all comers in the waters near Jardine Water Plant every September, the first Sunday after Labor day weekend.

Along the way, Big Shoulders has evolved to meet the needs and interests of the swimming community. A 2.5K distance was added in 1999, and at the twentieth annual race in 2010, a Little Shoulders division and distance was added for the kids, our future Big Shoulders champs. By 2011, Big Shoulders had grown to 1,000 swimmers from all parts of the globe, and more are burgeoning to join in the fun. In the best and worst of conditions, Big Shoulders persists in style. With the present emphasis in USMS on Open Water swimming, Big Shoulders 5K is one of a handful of premier open water events, which brings great prestige to ILMSA throughout the swimming world.

Further, Bill Mulliken has been a strong and continuing supporter of swimming on the World, National and local levels for years too numerous to count.

past recipients:

2022: George Wendt

2018: Fred Pigott

2014: Barry Dayton

2012: Bill Mulliken

Any swimmer registered for the current year with USMS/ILMSA may make a nomination.

However this is not an annual award, and the proposed swimmer should be someone whose contribution to ILMSA and swimming in general would be unique in the proper definition of the term. These people are very few.

To make a nomination, submit a one-page letter addressed to Chair, ILMSA Awards & Recognition, citing the reasons why the person deserves recognition and the award for the current year. Include:

- The name, club and team affiliation, address, telephone number, e-mail address for the person nominating;
- The name, club and team affiliation, address, telephone number, e-mail address for the person being nominated;
- What service or services were performed, and the period for which they were performed;
- The **unique impact** of the service or services to new programs or to improving ongoing programs;
- The scope of the service or services including the effect on members who have benefitted.

Submit nominations electronically by April 1st of the current year to: hillegondsm AT prodigy DOT net

The recipient receives:

- a lifetime membership to USMS/ILMSA
- a certificate of the achievements of the recipient in receiving the award
- a suitable plaque of the award