

Every year the CSI Board selects a recipient for the ConocoPhillips Service Award, which we all call the “Volunteer of the Year.” In an organization that runs its many programs year round for over 4000 athlete members on a tremendous amount of volunteer power, that is a big deal indeed. My observation is that this award is not just about “who put in the most hours over the year” or “who did the heaviest lifting”. It’s become more of a volunteer hall of fame distinction, recognizing truly outstanding individuals for their cumulative contribution over a period of years. This year’s honoree, Sue Lecza, certainly fits that bill – a true hall of famer.

Sue grew up swimming in CT from age 7 through college, and has given back to the sport at every opportunity, as an assistant coach in her 19<sup>th</sup> season with the Branford Stingrays and now also at Branford High. Sue is a Certified Public Accountant, and she has since 1999 brought her considerable professional skills to Connecticut Swimming’s Board as our volunteer Treasurer. I wish I had the time to make it clear to all of you exactly how much Sue has done to build a strong foundation for this organization and how valuable her day-to-day management of our budgets, reporting, bills and payments has been. CT Smimming is a non-profit corporation with annual revenues in excess of \$600K, employee payroll, audited financial statements and thousands if not tens of thousands of transactions each year. Keeping all that straight is a huge task. Sue makes it look easy, kind of like an Olympic swimmer makes moving through the water look effortless.

The Treasurer position is Sue’s long-distance event. She’s also done some sprints, like coaching 3 Zone teams and representing CT Swimming at the USA Swimming House of Delegates 3 times. But I want to highlight Sue’s middle-distance triumph, which is our Age Group Camps program. Before 2001, CSI’s age group camps efforts were dead. Sue took the initiative to do all the research, make all the arrangements and run our first three extremely successful camps. Under her leadership CT Swimming’s was recognized as one of the most active programs nationally, and it has continued to thrive now that she has handed it off to others.

When I was Age Group Championship Meet Director there were late nights at Wesleyan when I was buried in mountains of checks and receipts and bundles of cash, with Vinnie the caterer barking in my ear to get his bill paid. In those stressful moments, there was nobody in the world I was happier to see than Sue, coming to the rescue. And in this moment, I am just as happy to present the CT Swimming 2006 ConocoPhillips Service Award with great gratitude to Susan Lecza.