

## WAS - Diving Legend

# Tom Gompf

*2000 Honoree*



## The Nonpareil of Diving

**"A man WhoSam\*"**

*Tom Gompf spent a good portion of his youth learning to dive at the Dayton YMCA. He recalls his earliest coaches as Ray Zahn, George Burger and Lou Cox. The Dayton "Y" was also the home base of a number of trampoline performers. In High School Gompf won five National YMCA Diving titles and two National AAU Junior National Diving championships. When elected to the International Swimming Hall of Fame, one reads in his bio "He started as a young local competitor, advanced to the Olympic Games, performed in professional competition and, upon active retirement, served the international diving community as an administrative leader. He is a hard worker for the good of the sport and a friend to all. Gompf has had a profound international influence on the sport of diving." His work to add synchronized diving to the Olympics in 2000 is duly noted. Accordingly, he has contributed to his sport as an athlete, coach and administrator.*

Gompf was a two letter man at Ohio State University (Diving and Gymnastics 1961-65). He was a tumbler and won the NCAA trampoline title in 1962. He was a six times All American (Diving and Gymnastics). But it was diving that was in his blood. At Ohio State, he came under the influence of Swimming Hall of Fame honoree Coach Mike Peppe. Gompf won the U.S. National AAU Diving Championships twice on the 10m platform. In 1964 at the Tokyo Olympics, and under the watchful eye of coach, Dick Smith, himself a WAS "Legend," Tom won the bronze medal on the 10m platform, only two points behind gold medalist Bob Webster (USA) and one point behind silver medalist Klaus Dibiasi (Italy) both International Swimming Hall of Fame honorees (ISHOF). Tom went on to win National Championships in Spain and Japan and then competed in and won first place in the 1970 and 1971 World Professional High Diving Championships in Montreal. His next competition was diving off the cliffs of Acapulco. He survived! All this while flying several hundred combat missions in Vietnam from 1965 to 1967 earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Force Commendation Medal and the Air Medal with multiple silver clusters.

Gompf was specially gifted as a diving official and judged at the Pan Am Games and the Olympics.

### International Competitions:

- Japanese National Championships (1961) – 1st (3 and 10m)
- Olympic Games (1964) – Bronze (10m)
- Spanish National Championships (1965, Bilbao) – 1st (10m)
- Japanese National Championships (1966) – 1st (3m)
- World Professional High Dive Titles (1970-71, Montreal)

### National Titles:

- NAAU: 1962 (Trampoline)

- NAAU: 1963-64 (10m)

#### Coaching/Administrative:

The record below is a chronology of service to diving. His influence upon diving rivals that of his coach, Mike Peppe. USA Diving's historian, Dr. Ron O'Brien states, "Peppe, the swimming and diving coach at Ohio State University from 1931 to 1963, did more to promote and develop diving in this country than any other man."

- 1971 - 1982: Coach, University of Miami (Sic NCAA Diving Championships). Coached Greg Louganis and other Olympians and World Championships team members.
- 1976: Appointed Coach/Manager for the US Olympic Diving Team (Montreal).
- 1977 - 1980: Worked to enact the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 (Establishing stand alone NGBs for Aquatic Sports).
- 1977 - 2000: US Olympic Committee's Board of Directors.
- 1980: Helped organize US Diving, Inc. (Presently USA Diving, the NGB for Diving); Served on the Board of Directors for nineteen years.
- 1984: US Olympic Diving Team Manager (Los Angeles); Elected to FINA's Technical Diving Committee.
- 1986 - 1990: Board of Directors, International Swimming Hall of Fame.
- 1988 - 2000: President, FINA Technical Diving Committee.

#### Awards are inclusive of:

- 1984: USA Diving Outstanding Contributor.
- 1994: University of Miami's Sports Hall of Fame (Coaching).
- 1995 and 2005: USA Diving's Phil Boggs Award for Excellence in Diving.
- 1996: Olympic Torch Bearer ; FINA Silver Pin for Achievement.
- 1997: ISHOF Paragon Award for Outstanding Contributions to Diving.
- 1999: Honoree, Ohio State Univ. Sports Hall of Fame.
- 2000: Original Class of Honorees WAS Gallery of Legends.
- 2002: Honoree of the International Swimming Hall of Fame as a contributor.
- 2006: Max Ritter Award (First Honoree).

\*The Whosam award, named after 1948 and 1952 Olympic gold medallist Sammy Lee, annually honors a diving coach and athlete that adhere to the highest standards of physical and mental well-being.

The award was presented by Dr. Sammy Lee himself to Justin Wilcock and Tom Gompf in 2005.

#### References:

- RENICK, Marion, *Swimming Fever*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947. 181p. Biography of Mike Peppe, Ohio State University swimming and diving coach.
- Consultant: Jennifer Lowery of USA Diving