

Frank Murphy had a saying, “Spare me from the person who doesn’t have a passion for something.” Frank had many passions—ballet, symphony, tending his roses, his wife Lorraine—but one of his greatest passions was swimming. He gave his heart and soul to it, literally—in 1996 he suffered a massive heart attack during practice at Hains Point and doing one the things he loved most. He began his competitive swim career in the mid 1970’s at Fun ‘n’ Fitness in Arlington with coach John Flanagan and DC Masters. His passion was infectious-- Lorraine soon joined him in the pool. His passion in swimming was distance—the longer the better—and he excelled at it, placing in the USMS National Top 10 in freestyle events every year and establishing local meet records, some of which still stand. Several years ago Lorraine gave DC Masters a generous donation in Frank’s memory, and last year the team established the Frank Murphy Long Distance Award to the Potomac Valley swimmers who share his enthusiasm for the sport and particularly those who competed in the long distance events, both in the pool and open water, he so loved. Swimmers were awarded points based on their age-group finish places in USMS-sanctioned events from 1500m to 10,000m or more. Swimmers either nominated themselves or were nominated by a friend. The winners of the first annual Frank Murphy awards were Julie Oplinger, of Fairfax County Masters, and Jeff Roddin, of Montgomery Ancient Mariners.