

What do you consider to be the major issues facing USMS now and in the future? As a person holding an elected position within USMS, how would you address these issues?

Looking beyond the competitive swimmers to help increase membership numbers is a big concern. With competitive swimmers not being the majority of members, I want to find ways to help USMS be attractive to all potential swimmers, not just those who are looking to compete.

Please list USMS committees on which you have served. Include the dates you were on the committees and the names of the committee chairs under whom you served:

I have been a part of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee since 2017, when it was started as a task force by then-President Patty Miller. Sarah Welch was the chair of that task force, and remained the chair when it became a committee, until January 2022. I am currently serving as the chair of that committee.

Please list any other experience that relates to your qualifications for the position.

I have been a swimmer my entire life. I have seen the sport from multiple perspectives and feel I can bring those perspectives to my work on the board as an at-large member.

Please write a short summary statement that will be posted on the display board with your photograph at the HOD Meeting

The USMS board of directors needs to have a variety of voices – and faces – in its group, and as a member of USMS for 23 years, I have been hopeful that the people who are leading the organization would more accurately represent the world around us, but that has not always happened. The saying goes: “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Beyond being a person of color on the board, I feel that my time as a member of the board of directors will bring a wide-ranging voice of someone who is working at multiple levels within Masters swimming. I am a swimmer, a coach, a learn-to-swim instructor and the chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. I have a lot of investment in all levels of this organization, and I want to make sure the leadership works for every member.

From: Judy Gillies (jgillies1848@gmail.com)

Date: April 20, 2022

To: USMS Elections Committee

I nominate Jeff Commings for the post of At-Large Director for the Southwest Zone to the U.S. Masters Swimming Board of Directors.

Jeff has been a quiet force in Arizona for many years. Jeff and his partner, Geoff Glaser, started a Masters coaching program at La Paloma Country Club in 2008, as part of their own program, Dolphins of the Desert. The main focus of Dolphins of the Desert is private swimming lessons for children and adults, and Jeff has taken on the role of certified Adult Learn-To-Swim Instructor as part of his goal to get more adults involved in swimming. Their program is so popular that it is difficult sometimes finding available lesson times.

Also, at the LMSC level, besides swimming in almost every meet the LMSC hosts, he runs our board elections and at-large elections.

Jeff has been to multiple USMS Annual Meetings, and has made his mark with his involvement on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee as member, Vice Chair and now Chair.

And, Jeff himself continues to train and compete, setting new records almost every time he competes.

For all of the above reasons and even more, I endorse Jeff Commings as our next At-Large Director from the Southwest Zone.

Judy Gillies

Arizona LMSC Vice Chair

Arizona LMSC Officials Chair

Letter of Recommendation for Election to USMS Board of Directors

April 20, 2022

From: Sarah Welch

To: USMS Elections Committee

Dear Election Committee,

It is my honor to write a letter of recommendation for Jeff Comings as a candidate for At-Large Director for the Southwest Zone.

I have worked closely with Jeff for nearly ten years through his volunteer work with USMS. Jeff has extensive knowledge of USMS through his national level volunteer work, his work with his local LMSC, his publication work for USMS and USA Swimming, his coaching experience, and his ownership and management of his swim school, among other experiences. I met Jeff when I served on the USMS Board of Directors and the Board convened the first Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. Jeff volunteered as a member and has served throughout the four years of the taskforce. When that work culminated in USMS creating the Diversity and Inclusions Committee, Jeff continued his service with D&I since its inception, serving as Vice-Chair last year. This year it's been my pleasure to hand over to Jeff the role of Committee Chair for Diversity and Inclusion, a role in which he's hit the ground running.

Through Jeff's leadership as Vice Chair and Chair of Diversity and Inclusion, the Committee has created a series of webinars for two different audiences: Coaches and LMSC Leaders. The Committee had a presence at the recent 2022 Relay for Volunteers event, and created a peer-to-peer group (with the LMSC Development Committee) to support volunteers in the new role of LMSC Diversity Coordinator. He's been instrumental in bringing in new committee members who have further enriched the Committee's diversity of all kinds. Through Jeff's leadership, the Committee is actively engaged in promoting diversity and inclusion at all levels of USMS.

Jeff brings a very rich array of experiences to USMS through his volunteer and professional work. His experience as an international medalist with USA Swimming in the 1990s, being the first Black medal recipient for USA Swimming in international completion, through his hosting of broadcasts about swimming and coaching, his journalism and articles about swimming, his ownership and management of a swim school in Arizona, and his long-term service with USA Swimming will aid him greatly as a Director for USMS.

Jeff is a big picture thinker, a creative person, a thoughtful and collaborative team member—all qualities that make him exceptionally well qualified to serve on the USMS Board of Directors. Jeff's knowledge, experience, and proven leadership skills make him the right person to lead USMS into the future.

Sincerely,

Sarah Welch (PNA-LMSC, former Chair Diversity and Inclusion Committee, former BOD At-Large Director)