



U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING

Board of Directors Candidate Application Form

Date Submitted Saturday, June 1, 2024

Section 1: Candidate Information

Board Position Title

At-Large Director-South Central Zone

Candidate Name (as on USMS registration)

Nicole Christensen

Preferred Pronouns

She/Her/Hers

Profile Photo Upload



cropped photo for board application.jpg

Section 2: Qualification Questions

I am a current USMS member in good standing in this election year.

Yes

I have attended one or more annual meetings in the past five years.

Yes

USMS annual meetings attended in the last 5 years

Year Attended
2023
2022

Year Attended
2021
2020
2019

I plan to attend the Annual Meeting this year.

Yes

I plan to attend all Annual Meetings, Board of Director meetings, and other assigned meetings during my tenure.

Yes

I have the technological capability to fully participate in USMS videoconference meetings.

Yes

For at-large director positions: I am a member of an LMSC within my zone of candidacy.

Yes

Section 3: Nomination and Recommendations

First Nominator and Recommender

Recommender 1: Name

Jacky Merianos

Second Recommender

Recommender 2: Name

Karlene Denby

Recommender 2 LMSC or N/A

Gulf

Recommender 1 LMSC

North Texas

Section 4: USMS Background

USMS Permanent Member Number 065CM

USMS Profile URL <https://www.usms.org/people/065CM>

Current LMSC Gulf

Years as a USMS Member 15

Service at the LMSC Level

How many years have you served your LMSC?

10+

LMSC Service History

LMSC Position/Committee	Length of Service (Years)
Chair	2
Webmaster	11
Email Communications	5

Service at the Zone Level

How many years have you served at the Zone level?

1-5

Zone Service History

Zone Position/Committee	Length of Service (Years)
Chair	4
Webmaster	5
Email communications	5

Service at the National Level

How many years have you served at the National level?

1-5

National Service History

National Position/Committee	Length of Service (Years)
LMSC Development committee	4

Section 5: General Questions for all Candidates

Please state why you are interested in serving on the USMS Board of Directors.

To me, swimming is a lifesaver in many ways. As a young person growing up, swimming gave me my own space and identity away from events at home. Like many others, as an adult, swimming has been important for my mental, as well as physical, health. When life is demanding, and even too much at times, I can get in the pool, insulated by the water streaming around me, and I am able to be in the moment. When I get out, I am ready to tackle whatever else life may throw my way.

Because of my love for swimming and how much it has given to me, I have always wanted to share this experience with others. Whether it is hosting swim meets, serving on boards, training volunteers, working on fitness events, helping individuals, working on communications and websites, I always want to help others have the best swimming experience possible. To see how swimming can empower a person with new confidence and joy is the best reward possible.

I would like to serve on the USMS Board of Directors to continue working, at a higher level, on supporting adults through swimming. My hope is that through new connections and interactions, I would be able to contribute in fresh ways to bring value to the swimmers that I care about while supporting the USMS mission and vision.

What does USMS's mission mean to you? Please share a personal story.

USMS's mission is particularly important to me as this is exactly what swimming has done in my life. It empowered me to make changes and improvements that, without swimming, I may not have had the confidence and strength to do.

Starting in my late 20's, life took many unexpected turns from raising two, unrelated teenage nephews, along with my two daughters; having a sister die from alcoholism and looking after the children she left behind; taking care of both of my parents when they had cancer; living with and finally getting out of a troubled marriage and now, taking care of my sister with epilepsy and cerebral palsy. If not for swimming, I truly believe I would not have had the strength to deal with all of this and continue to have the energy to help others.

I have also seen swimming rescue people I know from difficult situations and get their life on a new course that is healthy and happy. One person I know, whose life was mired in unhappiness and uncertainty, decided to start swimming again to have an escape and release from their existing routine. They joined their Y, heard about a swim meet being hosted by the Woodlands, joined USMS to enter the meet and began the process of turning their lives around. Through their USMS membership, they were able to find new confidence, joy and friends. They found themselves again.

What do you consider to be USMS's greatest opportunities for the next 2 to 4 years? How would you advocate for these opportunities on the national board level?

I believe that USMS's greatest challenge and opportunity is creating meaningful relationships with swimmers who do not compete, may not be on a team and may not even know about USMS. They may swim on their own and are unaware that there are many others like them. Even for the swimmers who are USMS members, if they do not compete, they have to ask themselves every year "Should I sign up again?". By ensuring that they feel that there is value in their membership, we can keep them in the USMS family. Additionally, by making sure that USMS is a positive force in their lives, they are more likely to speak about it to their friends who swim. If they are excited about a fitness or virtual event, they will share that with enthusiasm. Membership begets membership.

The challenge for USMS is reaching the population that does not know about us or thinks we are only for competitive swimmers. While USMS has started some great initiatives such as the freestyle guide and swimming 101 on our website that are available to non-members, a person first has to know about the website. The social media campaigns are great opportunities to connect with individuals who may not know about us and direct them to learn more. I would advocate to continue the work to reach out to the non-USMS member population as well as working on innovative ways that haven't been thought of yet to engage them.

Section 6: Position-Specific Questions

What makes you a good candidate for a USMS at-large director? What skills, experiences, and attributes do you have that will contribute to the success of USMS?

I have had experience and interaction at many levels of the sport. Starting as an age group swimmer, I went on to swim parent, event organizer, general manager of a club team and finally USMS volunteer.

Most recently, I was the chair for the South Central Zone during which I developed relationships and opportunities for our Zone. When I started there was a feeling of separation between the LMSCs. I felt that creating a feeling of US instead of THEM was very important and I made that a priority.

My term started right before covid which was challenging. However in 2021 I was determined that we would have a zone championships meet again. I initiated a multi pool zone champs meet and found an open pool and host in each LMSC. I created the format and announcement for each venue and then merged all of the results so swimmers could see how they swam in relationships to the entire zone.

I also created an open water series with different distance options to encourage swimmers to try open water and also to travel around to different places in our Zone.

I am currently the Gulf LMSC Chair, webmaster and email communications as well as the Zone webmaster

and email communications. I am a member of the LMSC Development Committee and have been since 2020. I have been a certified meet director since the 1990s and starting running USMS meets in 2011. I am passionate about swimmers and swimming.

Describe a situation where you had to balance your own perspective with input from individuals representing various viewpoints, and how you ensured that all perspectives were considered.

As a real estate agent, I must do this each time I work for my client.

One of my most challenging transactions involved a divorced couple. The ex-husband still occupied the home although the court authorized my client to sell the house with the net proceeds to go to her ex-husband.

He refused to cooperate or even allow access to the house. It was imperative that I break this impasse, so the expenses did not continue to accrue.

By understanding the reason why the ex-husband was so resistant to going forwards with the sale and then working with him so that he felt respected and listened to, we were able to get him out of the house and prepare the home for sale.

Once listed, several offers came in. Once again, the ex-husband was uncooperative and did not want to consider any of them. By staying respectful, patient and businesslike, I was able to convince him that the highest offer was indeed an acceptable one.

During this time, I had to explain to the other agent the delicacy of the situation without breaking the confidence of my client.

Through understanding, and working with, all parties to ensure no one felt shut out, I was able to negotiate the transaction to a successful closing, freeing my client so that she could go on with her life.

Section 7: Agreements and Submission

Election Operating Guidelines Accepted

Board Standards Accepted

Conflict of Interest Policy and Questionnaire Accepted

Code of Conduct Accepted

Unsporting Conduct Accepted

Attestation Accepted

Consent to Publish Accepted

Consent to Run

Accepted

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "C. White", written in a cursive style.

Date Signed

Saturday, June 1, 2024



U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING

Board of Directors Nomination/Recommendation Form

Submitted on

Sunday, June 16, 2024

Section 1: Nominator/Recommender Information

Name

Jacky Merianos

LMSC or N/A

North Texas

Zone or N/A

South Central

USMS Permanent Member Number

KU9SX

Section 2: Candidate Information

Board Position Title

At-Large Director-South Central Zone

Candidate Name (as on their USMS registration)

Nicole Christensen

Section 3: Nomination & Recommendation

How do you know the candidate?

I met Nicole when I became Chair of the North Texas LMSC in fall of 2022. Nicole was Zone Chair at the time, and she introduced herself to me fairly quickly. Since then, Nicole has been and remains a mentor and colleague that I work very closely with through much of my USMS volunteer work.

What makes this person a good candidate for this position? What skills, experiences, or attributes do they bring that will contribute to the success of USMS in this role?

It is my great honor to nominate and recommend Nicole Christensen of Gulf Masters Swimming as a candidate for At-Large Director of the South-Central Zone.

I have known Nicole for just over two years. In these two years, she has dedicated more time and energy to U.S. Masters Swimming than most give in a decade. During her years of service, Nicole has served both her LMSC and Zone Board in various roles and capacities, as well as been an active committee member of the LMSC Development Committee.

Nicole is currently the Chair, Webmaster and Communications Chair of the Gulf LMSC, as well as the Open Water Chair, Zone Championship Committee Chair and Webmaster of the South-Central Zone. In addition to serving in all of these roles, she also finds time to host local masters meets and mentor new meet/race directors throughout our Zone. The immense work she puts in behind the scenes is solely to provide opportunities to her local masters.

An example of Nicole's commitment to her local master swimmers can be seen through all of the work she's put into developing the South-Central Zone Open Water Grand Prix. When Nicole was South-Central Zone Chair in 2021, she noticed a growing demand for open water opportunities in our Zone. Very quickly, Nicole connected with the LMSC Chairs and Vice Chairs in our Zone and pitched her vision of assembling a Zone open water swim series. In 2022, the series launched with 3 swims. This year (2024), the South-Central Zone Open Water Grand Prix is in its 3rd year, with 5 open water swims included in the series.

As tremendous of a leader as she is, it's Nicole's mentorship that has made the biggest impact in her LMSC and our Zone. Elevating and educating those she works with is her greatest strength. It takes a village to run our LMSCs/Zones, and Nicole is constantly working with her village to make sure they have everything they need to succeed. She has played an essential role in my personal development and is a big reason I am the level of USMS volunteer that I am today.

I cannot think of a more passionate or dedicated candidate to represent our Zone. She has already brought great success to her LMSC and our Zone. I have no doubt she will bring her enthusiasm and work ethic to the national level if given the change. I recommend her candidacy to you for the role of At-Large Director with my highest endorsement.

Section 4: Agreements & Submission

Nominator/First Recommender

Accepted

Attestation

Accepted

Consent to Publish

Accepted

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly "Nicole".

Date Signed

Sunday, June 16, 2024



U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING

Board of Directors Nomination/Recommendation Form

Submitted on

Sunday, June 2, 2024

Section 1: Nominator/Recommender Information

Name

Karlene Denby

LMSC or N/A

Gulf

Zone or N/A

South Central

USMS Permanent Member Number

02AAW

Section 2: Candidate Information

Board Position Title

At-Large Director-South Central Zone

Candidate Name (as on their USMS registration)

Nicole Christensen

Section 3: Nomination & Recommendation

How do you know the candidate?

Nicole and I have worked together for many years as fellow volunteers on the Gulf LMSC Board.

What makes this person a good candidate for this position? What skills, experiences, or attributes do they bring that will contribute to the success of USMS in this role?

I would like to nominate Nicole Christensen for the position of At-Large Director - South Central Zone.

If there was a definition for "swim volunteer extraordinaire" in the dictionary, it would feature Nicole's picture beneath it. Nicole has been the consummate volunteer in the Gulf LMSC, the South Central Zone, and USMS for many years.

Nicole's can-do attitude has resulted in benefits for both the Gulf LMSC and the South Central Zone in the following ways.

- Nicole ensured that the Zone had LCM Championship meets from 2016 to 2019 when there was little interest by others in organizing and hosting the event. She was able to obtain a world-class facility at Texas A&M University, secure volunteers, provide an event social, and conduct a high-quality three-day competition despite the distance between her home in Houston and College Station.

- Nicole has set up and maintains both the Gulf LMSC and South Central Zone websites, keeping both sites up to date and easy to navigate. She has also set up email blasts and social media pages for both

organizations with the goal of providing better communication with all our swimmers.

· During her tenure as South Central Zone Chair, she organized a virtual Zone Championship meet during the pandemic. This was the gargantuan task of getting five different LMSCs to pick a common weekend, rent pool space, promote and conduct the meets, and then merge the results to determine our virtual Zone champions.

· There was a lack of open water swim opportunities in the Zone. Recognizing this, Nicole spearheaded a multi-event open water Zone swim series beginning in 2022 with three events in the Gulf, South Texas, and Arkansas LMSCs. The series expanded into North Texas in 2023, and it plans to host at least four swims in 2024.

· Nicole is currently the Gulf LMSC chair, ably organizing and overseeing the LMSC's efforts to provide multiple services to our membership, such as stroke development clinics, virtual fitness events, open water clinics, the annual Thanksgiving Day swim, Gulf Swim University, and multiple pool and open water competitions.

Nicole also volunteers on a national level. She has been a member of the LMSC Development Committee since 2020. Nicole's past committee memberships include the Championship Committee (2018-2019) and a previous stint on the LMSC Development Committee (2013). Her contributions have not gone unnoticed as Nicole was the recipient of the USMS Dorothy Donnelly Service Award in 2019 and the USMS June Krauser Communication Award in 2022. She has also been a Level 1 and Level 2 USMS Certified Coach since 2011.

Nicole would be a valuable addition to the USMS Board of Directors. She possesses a deep appreciation of USMS's history and procedures while also having the ability to think outside the box and come up with alternative and creative ways to tackle an issue

or problem. Nicole is open to other's input and points of view, rather than having an inflexible attitude. In serving with Nicole for many years, I can attest that she works well with the other LMSC board members and strives to achieve consensus as our LMSC Chair.

I offer my unreserved recommendation of Nicole Christensen as a worthy candidate for election to the USMS Board of Directors.

Section 4: Agreements & Submission

Second Recommender

Accepted

Attestation

Accepted

Consent to Publish

Accepted

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Denby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "y".

Date Signed

Sunday, June 2, 2024