

# 90 Years Young

## City Resident Sets National Marks In Several Events

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Jim Young sent out a group email at noon Monday from his home in northern California. It was clear that the former Jamestown resident, who gained athletic notoriety for his basketball talents dating back four decades, could hardly contain his excitement.

"In my life, I have played in and witnessed many athletic events, competitions, games, etc.," the 2013 Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame inductee wrote. "I was happy and honored to witness an athletic event last weekend which may have been the most outstanding of my life."

By later that evening and into Tuesday morning, replies to that email began to fill inboxes from all corners.

### Article Photos



90-year-old Jamestown resident Judy Young is pictured next to her starting block at the YMCA Masters National Swimming Championships in Sarasota, Fla.

Submitted photo

"So cool, so inspiring," read one. "Thanks for sharing this awesome news."

"That's phenomenal," read another. "Great athletes in the family."

"Outstanding accomplishment," implored yet another.

At the bottom of Jim's original email was an attached photograph. The image was of his mother, Judy, standing poolside in Sarasota, Florida. Wearing a bathing suit, with goggles perched on her forehead, Judy had one hand on a starting block with the beautiful Sarasota YMCA Swimming Complex in the background.

It was clear that the 90-year-old resident of Carlson Towers on the Lutheran campus in Jamestown, wasn't in Florida only for a vacation. Rather, she was in the Sunshine State to compete in the YMCA Masters National Swimming Championships, with her sons, Jim and David, and daughter-in-law Martha cheering her on.

And, boy, did they all have plenty to celebrate.

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Judy grew up near a bay in Queens County and was introduced to swimming by her mother.

"She always liked the water," Judy recalled. "She got us into it early on."

Closing in on 90 years later, Judy is still going strong, and in record-setting fashion. Representing the Jamestown YMCA and competing in the women's 90-94 age group in Sarasota, Judy swam eight events - the 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 freestyles and the 50, 100 and 200 backstrokes - over four days. All she did at the end of the competition was return to David and Martha's home in Fort Myers with eight gold medals. The oldest one among hundreds of swimmers ages 18 to 90, Judy set national YMCA Masters records in her age group in the 200 and 500 freestyles and the 100 backstroke.

"I'm in a state of shock," she said.

As a point of full disclosure, yours truly grew up four houses away from the Youngs on Jamestown's west side. Even as a kid, I was amazed at her fitness. It wasn't unusual in the 1970s and 1980s for her and Jan Rogers, a good friend and neighbor, to take daily walks from Hallock Street in Jamestown to the Lakewood Rod & Gun Club and back. On Sundays, they'd make a trip to and from a coffee shop on the corner of Third and Washington streets in the city.

"I've always been active," Judy said. "I just didn't like sitting still. I think activity has been part of my life from the get-go."

A member of the Jamestown YMCA since her family moved to Jamestown in 1961, Judy was a regular during recreation swims there and ultimately became a charter member of the Y's Masters team in 1987. Her trip to nationals last week was the third of her career, joining excursions to Cleveland and Santa Clara, California on her impressive resume.

But she "never in a million years" expected to do so well in Sarasota. Following are her times: 1,000 freestyle, 26 minutes, 24.24 seconds; 50 backstroke, 1:06.40; 200 freestyle, 4:56.81; 500 freestyle, 12:38.39; 200 backstroke, 5:17.10; 50 freestyle, 1:01.04; 100 backstroke, 2:28.88; and 100 freestyle, 2:10.11.

"Swimming is one of the few things that when you get older you don't mind, because you move into a new (age) group and you're the youngest in the new group," said Judy, whose

"competition" in Sarasota was the clock, because she was the lone woman entered in the 90-94 age group. "Going from 89 to 90 is a thrill. That was the incentive why I picked this year (to compete)."

Judy has designs on competing at nationals again in five years. There's no reason to think she won't. She swims twice a week at the Jamestown Y and works out on a treadmill and bicycle as part of a wellness program at Chautauqua Physical and Occupational Therapy in the city.

"Basically, I feel if I'm going to live, I want to be able to live as well as I can," Judy said. "In order to do that, you have to keep active mentally and physically."