

## Jay DeFinis – Great Lakes Zone Candidate for At-Large Director



The Election Committee has deemed that Jay DeFinis is a member in good standing of U.S. Masters Swimming. The candidate has indicated he is planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year and, if elected, is planning to attend all HOD Meetings during his tenure in office.

The candidate was nominated by *Nadine Day* and received letters of recommendation from *Nancy Ridout* and *Carrie Stolar* in accordance with the USMS Election Operating Guidelines.

The candidate provided the following responses on the Candidate Questionnaire/Consent-to-Run Form:

### Section Two: Candidate Qualifications

- I am a member in good standing of USMS in this election year:*                      X   Yes \_\_\_ No
- I am planning to attend the HOD Meeting for this election year:*                      X   Yes \_\_\_ No
- I am planning to attend all HOD Meetings during my tenure in office:*                      X   Yes \_\_\_ No
- I have attended 1 or more HOD Meeting in the past five years?*                      X   Yes \_\_\_ No

***Please list the USMS National HOD Meetings you have attended, including the dates of attendance:***

Jacksonville 2014, Kansas City 2015, Atlanta 2016, Dallas 2017, Jacksonville 2018, St Louis 2019.

### Section Three: Questions

***Why are you interested in this position and why do you believe you would be a good candidate?***

I represent the novice swimmer who has steadily improved and enjoyed the benefits of regular swimming. Beginning as a fitness swimmer, I joined USMS in 1985 to become fit and train for Triathlons. In 1991, I competed in Ironman Canada, and swam a 9 mile Lake Erie open water swim. After a long absence of swimming, I rejoined OHIO Masters in 2009. Through OHIO Masters swim meets, socials, and open water swims in Lake Erie, I learned about volunteer opportunities for USMS. I decided to serve at the LMSC level as both Lake Erie Secretary and Chair. We have grown our board with representation across all levels of swimmers in our local communities. In 2014, I had the opportunity to attend USMS convention and see how the national USMS organization works. My first committee assignment was on the Investment Committee. This experience helped me understand the financial and operational side of USMS. From my professional years of board involvement and my passion for helping others learn to swim, I was asked to serve on the Swimming Saves Lives Foundation Board. Over the past four years, I have been working with the ALTS and SSLF initiatives and fundraising. The incredible stories and dedication of our members and instructors have motivated me to do more.

My professional life as a financial advisor, my swimming experiences, and volunteer efforts will help bring perspective to help grow our organization. I have developed the ability to manage and develop relationships and foster growth with those on my committees. Flexibly, communication, listening, and critical thinking are skills I can add to the USMS at Large Director Board position.

***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?***

Issue 1. Addressing the cost and challenges of integrating technology and Marketing the USMS brand. Integrating technology can be challenging and costly with time and financial resources. With most service organizations that have many loyal and supportive members, the emotional out pouring in change can be hard to integrate with the “non-emotional” hard wiring of technological advancements. This is where board leadership plays a key role in the growth and development of the organization. Continuing to develop and deliver a clearly defined communication process with the USMS National Office and its Board is essential. The two must continue to evaluate and create transparency through accountability in delivering the information we share with membership. Communicated constantly, progress and relevant information will help foster a forum that attracts and helps prioritize the multitude of ideas that are valuable in promoting organizational growth (in general people are attracted to a consistent message and tend to disengage with inconstant message.)

Issue 2. Tracking the development and studying needs of all the member swimmers, from the new/fitness swimmer, our coaches, the generational swimmers, college club swimmers and our competitive swimmers will be essential for the organization to continue to be valuable and relevant in today’s ever changing environment.

Issue 3. Expansion of ALTS, fitness programs, and integrating the Swimming Saves Lives brand. We have a great national cause that will continue to make USMS more relevant by continuing to add educational workshops, financial support and community involvement across the country which is critical to organizational growth and its membership.

Issue 4. Post pandemic challenges. Critical and creative thinking are vital for the future growth and success of the organization. My prior organizational experiences and board involvement can help provide a new and fresh perspective in this area.

***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:***

Current USMS positions: Swimming Saves Lives Foundation, Chair 2017-Present. Served under USMS Presidents Patty Miller and Peter Guadagni.

Ad-Hoc Adult Learn to Swim Programming Committee Ex-Officio 2020 (present) Carrie Stolar, Chair

Previous USMS positions: Investment Committee, 2016-2019, Phil Dodson, Chair, Stan Benson, Chair  
Swimming Saves Lives, member 2016-2017 Brandon Franklin, Chair

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

***Professionally:***

Financial and Wealth Management Advisor for Northwestern Mutual for 30 years. B.S. in Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering from Penn State University. Served on several Industry and Nonprofit Boards.

***USMS Experiences:***

Current Lake Erie Chair 2017-present

Lake Erie Secretary 2013-2017

USMS Adult Learn Instructor Certification, 2018

OHIO Masters Club member, 2009-present

***Please list any other information you would like included.***

Lake Erie Relay Swim across Lake Erie, SSLF fundraiser raised \$9,200 for SSLF Grants, 2016

Penn State University, College of Earth and Mineral Sciences Alumni Association Board Chair, 1996-1999

Penn State University Alumni Council member, National Service Week Chair, 1997

Penn State University Alumni Association, Volunteer of the Year, 1999

Northwestern Mutual Association of Agents, Field Advisory Board, 2009 – 2012

Cornerstone of Hope (Ohio regional grief center) Development chair and executive committee member responsible for fundraising with a 2.6 million annual budget, 2010-present

Gay Games Cleveland 2012-2014, Cleveland Community Development Chair, Lead a fundraising campaign that Raised \$4.2 million in sponsorships and community grants.

Awarded Federation of Gay Games Host City Volunteer of the Games 2014.

Million Dollar Round Table member, (International Association of Financial Professionals) Divisional Vice President 2017 .Currently elected class A trustee for the MDRT Foundation Board (manage and oversee \$36 million Foundation that awards \$2 Million in grants all across the globe), 1997-present

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

Serving the Great Lakes Zone's membership and USMS, I would bring leadership, integrity and perspective while representing our swimmers. We all come to swimming through different paths. My swimming journey started as a beginner swimmer, progressing to a fitness swimmer, open water distance swimmer, competitive pool swimmer, and USMS volunteer both on the local and national level. Whether we are celebrating our successes, supporting our peers, helping others to learn to swim, improving one's ability to swim, or offering moral and financial support when we struggle in our swimming communities, the miracle of swimming together unites us all and helps us care (and do things we never thought we could!).



**U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING**

From: Nadine Day, Past President

Date: 4/25/2020

Subject Line: Nomination for Jay M DeFinis for the Great Lakes At Large Board of Directors

To: The Elections Committee

I, Nadine Day, who is a member from the Great Lake Zone, nominate Jay M DeFinis for Great Lakes Zone At Large Director position.

Respectfully,

Nadine Day, USMS Past President  
Indiana LMSC  
Great Lakes Zone Member

Letter of Recommendation for Jay DeFinis, candidate for At-Large Director from the Great Lakes Zone

From: Nancy Ridout, past-president U.S. Masters Swimming, SSL Board of Trustees member

April 27, 2020

To the Elections Committee,

Jay DeFinis has an abundance of qualities that would qualify him to be an outstanding member of the U.S. Masters Swimming Board of Directors.

Within our organization he has contributed his leadership locally as the Lake Erie LMSC Secretary and Chair, and nationally as a member of the Investment Committee and as a Trustee for the Swimming Saves Lives Foundation, as chair since 2017. He has attended the National HOD Meetings every year since 2014. He is someone who joined for fitness and through his experience with our program – people, mission, goals, and opportunities – has felt motivated to give back through his many talents and expertise.

His experience as a member or the leader of many different Boards of Directors is what I believe will make a significant contribution to our Board of Directors. He knows how to work with and within a Board as his experience shows. He knows how to encourage the Board members to focus, weigh pros and cons, and arrive at conclusions. He understands the various backgrounds that comprise a group and is experienced in managing the process that will result in a successful Board. Below are examples of his experience in working with Boards.

- 1- Penn State University College of Earth and Mineral Sciences Alumni Assoc., chair 1996-1999
- 2- Penn State University Alumni Council - National Service Week chair 1997, Volunteer of the Year 1999
- 3- Northwestern Mutual Field Advisory Board 2009 to 2012
- 4- Cornerstone of Hope (Ohio regional grief center 2010- to present, current development chair and executive committee member responsible for fund raising with 2.6 million annual budget.)
- 5- Million Dollar Round Table member 1997-present, divisional vice president 2017; currently elected class A trustee for the MDRT Foundation Board that manages and oversees 36-million-dollar foundation that awards 2 million in grants around the globe
- 6- Cleveland Community Development chair raising 4.2 million dollars in sponsorships and community grants for Gay Games Cleveland 2012-2014.

I have worked with Jay on the SSL Foundation and he is making a difference in our understanding our goals and the paths that will help achieve them. All of our current Board members are knowledgeable and passionate about U.S. Masters Swimming and keeping our program vibrant and successful. Jay combines this enthusiasm with additional significant involvement with various not-for-profit Boards and how to achieve effective communication and teamwork. It is for these reasons I enthusiastically recommend Jay DeFinis for the At-Large Director from the Great Lakes Zone.

Nancy Ridout, past-president U.S. Masters Swimming, SSL Board of Trustees member



**U.S. MASTERS  
SWIMMING**

Date: April 27, 2020

Subject Line: Recommendation of Jay DeFinis, for At-Large Director, Great Lakes Zone

To: The Elections Committee

I am writing to you today to enthusiastically recommend Jay DeFinis for the position of At-Large Director from the Great Lakes Zone. Jay has successfully served as the Lake Erie Masters secretary and Chair. He has also volunteered on the national level for USMS, initially serving on the investment committee then chairing the Swimming Saves Lives Foundation and becoming an ex officio of the ALTS Programming Committee.

Jay began with USMS as a fitness swimmer, progressing to participating in triathlons, most notably an Ironman, open water swims and competitive pool swims. From there he got his ALTS instructor certification to help others begin their swim stories. He has truly experienced the full progression of swimming. With this background, he is able to understand the motivations of the fitness swimmer, the open water swimmer, and the competitive pool swimmer as they relate to USMS membership.

In his professional life, Jay's experience in finance will be particularly useful as USMS helps clubs get back on their feet once they are allowed to reopen. He has proven experience in fundraising and collaborating on Boards for other organizations. In working with Jay on the SSLF and ALTS Programming Committee, I have firsthand experience of his strong communication and listening skills, not to mention his flexibility, critical thinking skills and ability to develop relationships with others. These skills will help him become a strong member/contributor on/to the USMS Board of Directors.

Jay's experience and skills coupled with his passion for swimming and his dedication to our organization make him an ideal candidate for this position.

I am pleased to endorse his candidacy for At-Large Director from the Great Lakes Zone, and give my permission for this letter to be advertised to USMS delegates

Sincerely,

Carrie Stolar

At-Large Director, Breadbasket Zone

Chair, ALTS Programming Committee

Ex-officio, Swimming Saves Lives Foundation