

In Loving Memory of Tom Schumann (1949-2024)
Tennessee Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association

Tom Schumann was a pillar of swimming in Tennessee. He served as a leader within TISCA, including as our President, and also as a leader for the [KISL](#), for [GKAIA](#) and Southeastern Swimming and the SEC. [In multiple years](#), Tom earned the distinction of being the most active official in all of Southeastern Swimming, and in 2020 he earned the [Phillips Volunteer Award](#). He was as omnipresent on the pool deck as anyone. People called him “the Godfather” for good reason.

As TISCA’s Knoxville Regional Vice President, the role he served in most recently, Tom was always proud to share the news from the region, to offer guidance to other regions about how things operated in KISL, and to take suggestions or best practices from others. During the pandemic, he spoke about the challenges facing the Knoxville region with a mix of appropriate concern and realism, but also with a measure of optimism: that pool space limitations would improve, that our high school programs would recover from those lean years, that the sport would soldier on.

One aspect of Tom that stood out to anyone who knew him was his unwavering willingness to serve others. Whether mentoring new officials, guiding young coaches, or helping others step into leadership roles, Tom's focus was never on the recognition or titles that came with his work. Instead, he cared most about ensuring the swimming community had the best support possible. He approached every interaction with humility, prioritizing the success of others over personal accolades. Tom's life was a model of service and selflessness, demonstrating that true leadership is about lifting others up and making space for them to thrive. His legacy is not only in the roles he held but in the countless people he inspired and empowered along the way. For young officials, he offered appreciation for joining the officiating crew and was always willing to talk through a call. To new coaches, he was instructive and empathetic, never condescending or dismissive.

Tom knew how a meet should be managed and governed, and he was an absolute model of professionalism. He would lead stroke briefings and pre-meet coaches’ meetings with a degree of good humor that always served to put people at ease: a little smirk that accompanied a pun or a joke, a point of clarification that elicited a chuckle. Every session, every heat was worthy of that attention to detail; every athlete and coach deserved that. He was perpetually upbeat and present, glad to be present to support the sport and its people.

We will miss his leadership, his support, his advocacy, and his spirit of fairness and selflessness.

- The TISCA Board

Tom’s full obituary is available [here](#).