

# A Salute to Shari

## Coach retires after three decades

It was hot and stuffy and all the metal was rusted over due to the constant humidity. The room was cluttered. Papers, books, pictures, stuffed animals and trophies cluttered the floor, reaching a ceiling. "This is going to be fun to clean, maybe I'll just leave it all here," head coach Shari Walling laughed.

Walling had to sort through 33 years of memories as she retired. The walls were covered in posters of previous teams, and motivational quotes. A plastic jelly fish hung from the ceiling next to a plush dragon and a bright fluorescent 'open' sign pulled it all together. Walling picked up a forest green alligator that she had sitting on a cluttered filing cabinet. "Bert is coming with me," Walling said. Walling found Bert in the Urbandale pool's female locker room during her first years of coaching. Bert was the mascot and inspiration during championships.

Walling along with former athletic director Gary Ross, created a program open to anyone. meaning that no one was turned away.

"Swimming is very different from most other sports," she said. "If you have a commitment to participate, you should be given respect, the element of respect is what makes the team. That's just how I coach!"

Throughout the years the team built traditions both in and out of practice. One tradition was a series of test sets. These workouts were meant to push the swimmers and gage improvement. "We do specific sets, like on New Year's Eve we do King of the Mountain," junior Vassil Tchaprassov said. "We all swim 100's (meters) and we drop a second on every-

one of them until everyone is out, it's kind a competition to see who can do the most."

"It's like it's own holiday, they come at the same time they always do," senior Micheal Schmitz said.

There were other traditions. After Saturday practices and meets the team went out to eat. "We go to Culvers a lot!" Schmitz said. "We met this guy named Trey, he was pretty inspirational. He didn't really understand that we were swimmers. He was a basketball player, so he would always give us basketball advice like how to handle the ball and tell us about moves and having a good defense."

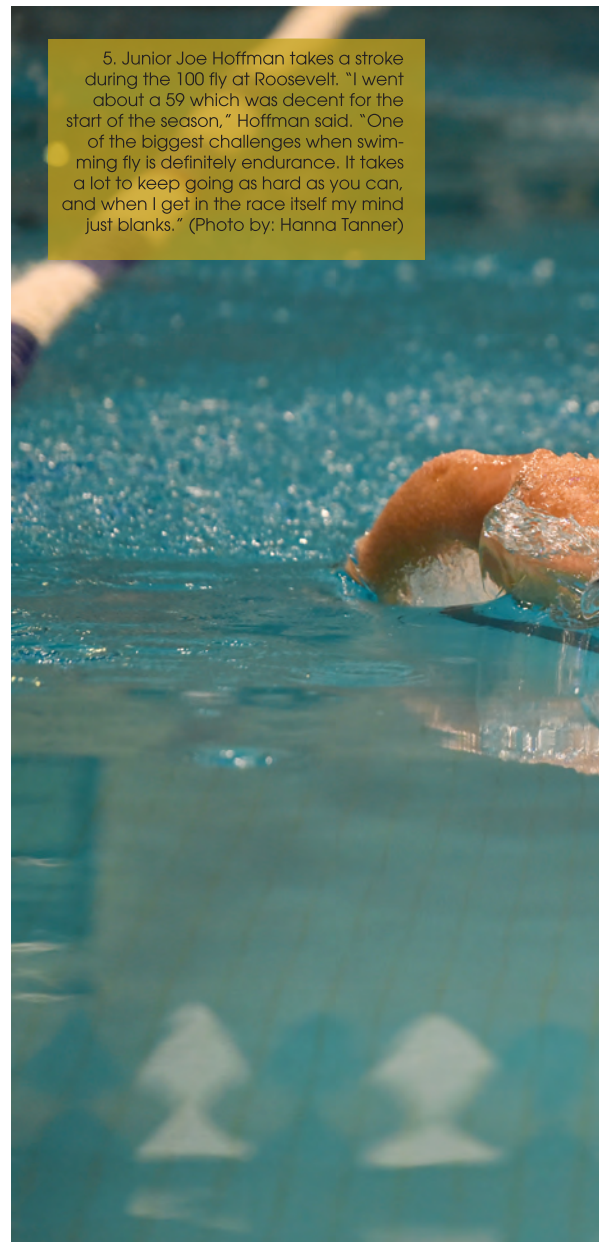
Saturdays and swim meets were one of the few times when the team was all together. However, the team atmosphere never wavered. "We all talk together, all sit together and cheer together," Schmitz said.

"When we are marking time drops and everyone is very engaged in what everyone else is doing that's when I feel it's really a team," Walling said. "They really want to do something well and what each person to do something well."

At the end of every season they celebrated with a banquet. "The team banquet was always fun, we passed out awards and stuff and seeing all the footage from the year is always fun to watch, and the food is always good," Tchaprassov said.

Sophomore Spencer Olson said he would miss Walling. "It's good for her, I guess it had to happen eventually. I just want someone [who will] keep all the traditions so that everyone can get the same experience."

5. Junior Joe Hoffman takes a stroke during the 100 fly at Roosevelt. "I went about a 59 which was decent for the start of the season," Hoffman said. "One of the biggest challenges when swimming fly is definitely endurance. It takes a lot to keep going as hard as you can, and when I get in the race itself my mind just blanks." (Photo by: Hanna Tanner)



1. Junior Cole Phillips swims the 100 backstroke at the meet against Roosevelt. He swam a 1:00.01, the second best of the season. Teammates sophomore Spencer Olson, junior Max VanDerPol and freshman Nate Sokolowski and Phillips placed 19th at state in the 200 medley. (Photo by: Hanna Tanner)

2. Taking a breath, freshman Gavin Gallagher swims the 500 free at Waukee. The team lost 59-111. (Photo by: H. Tanner)

3. Senior Braedon Heun jumps off the diving board with hopes of removing his shorts before hitting the water during Senior Night. "I just remember looking at the seniors do this tradition for the past four years of my high school experience and always wanting to be one of the ones to complete it, and I finally accomplished this that night and there's no other feeling being able to do it." (Photo by: Hanna Tanner)

4. Sophomore Thomas Ludwig swims the 100 breaststroke at the Ames meet. Ludwig placed third at districts and 24th at state in the event. His 1:02.27 time in the breaststroke was the best on the team for the season. (Photo by: Hanna Tanner)

5. The team makes a tunnel during Senior Night as Noah Mable runs through it. Mable, a senior at Urbandale, was a three-sport athlete running cross country and track in addition to swimming. Johnston and Urbandale have shared a team since 1977. (Photo by: Hanna Tanner)

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66 Boys Swimming

Story By: Abby Watkins  
Captions By: Hanna Tanner