



"I will endeavor to retain
the spirit of youth"
-Sigma Chi Creed, George
Ade ΔΔ 1887

Delta Delta Brother Recalls 1948 Olympic Experience



Keith Carter '49 holding his 1948 Olympic silver medal and Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame plaque.

It's been 64 years but Keith Carter '49 remembers the last time the Olympics was held in London. He was there ... as a member of the U.S.A. swimming team. Brother Carter recalls that the city was recovering from the devastation of the bombing attacks during World War II which had ended three years earlier. "It was bombed out to hell," recalled Keith, "I saw a lot of destruction, it was unbelievable. You had to go quite far to see a building that wasn't damaged."

An Olympic Medal

Keith made his mark at the 1948 Olympics in the 200 meter breast stroke where he finished second and received a silver medal. In his other event, the 100 meter free style, he swam very well in the semi-final heat, just missing the Olympic record and losing to U.S. teammate and college rival Walter Fis of Iowa, the eventual gold medal winner, by one-tenth of a second. In the finals Keith did not have a good race and finished fourth.

NCAA and AAU National Champion

Following the 1948 Olympics, Keith returned to Purdue for his senior year, where he became the NCAA and AAU National champion in the 200 yard breast stroke. He also was the Big Ten champion in 1948 in the 50 yard free style and 200 yard breast stroke, and repeated in 1949 as the 200 yard breast stroke champion. Keith set several national records as he became an All-American for the Boilemakers.

In 1994 Keith was inducted into the inaugural class of the Purdue Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame.

Purdue Years

Following a three stint in the Army where he served as a bombardier, Keith enrolled at Purdue based on the recommendation of a close friend to study electrical engineering. Brother Carter said when he rushed Delta Delta he liked the Sigma Chi brothers right off the bat. He recalls his Purdue and Sigma Chi days fondly and has remained close to his Sig brothers and the university.

Life Moves On

Upon graduation Keith decided to retire from swimming and not continue to train for the 1952 Olympics. Keith commented, "I wanted to get a job and start a career, I didn't want to wait four years." Keith went to work for Reliance Electric, where he worked as an applications engineer and later as a sales manager.

When he retired at age 65, he was talked into entering "masters" swim competitions where he set national and world age-group records over the next 10 years and had a chance to compete all over the globe, including London.

Keith and his Sweetheart, Helen, who have been married 65 years, raised three children, and now live in Asheville, NC. Keith will turn 88 on July 30 just as the London Olympics get underway. Among the few mementos he has from his competitive days are the silver medal he won in 1948 and a plaque commemorating his induction into Purdue's Athletics Hall of Fame.

For many of us just the thought of competing for our country in the Olympics would be a thrill. To know a brother who competed against the very best and proved he was one of the world's best, is truly something every Delta Delta brother can be proud of. Congratulations Brother Carter.

More of the Story

To read a great story on Keith in Asheville's Citizens Times go to [Keith Carter Olympian](#).

