



Gertrude Ederle, Honor Swimmer, United States of America, 1963



Playing chess with IMSHOF Honoree Ishak Helmy
Personal Website (None known)

Gertrude Ederle was once the world's most celebrated woman for becoming the first woman to swim the English Channel in 14 hours and 31 minutes in 1926. When Gertrude returned to New York City, an estimated two million New Yorkers lined the sidewalks on August 27, 1926, to heap their applause and tons of confetti on her. She toured America after her Channel record, demonstrating her freestyle in a specially built swimming tank and made cameo appearances at Billy Rose's Aquacade at the New York World's Fair in 1939. She was deaf from childhood due to measles and dedicated her life to teaching deaf children.

At the 1924 Paris Olympic, she won a gold medal as the leadoff swimmer on the United States 4×100 meter freestyle relay to set a world record and added bronze medals in the 100 meter and 400 meter freestyle races. She set 29 world and American records, at distances from 100 meters to 500 meters before she tried to cross the English Channel in 1925 when she was disqualified when a support team member grabbed her arm to assist. In her 1926 record swim from France to England, Ederle wore a revolutionary two-piece bathing suit and personally designed wrap-around goggles, which were kept watertight with molten candle wax. She is also an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (1965).

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)