

Michael Bell

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My grandfather worked on a freighter on the Great Lakes briefly following his return from WWII. He shared his love of history and of our great state. I visited the Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point when I was young and returned as an adult with my kids. We grew up listening to Gordon Lightfoot's song about the Edmond Fitzgerald.

Swimming has been a huge part of my life from the time I was young until now. I was a high school state champion in the 50 Free, swam in college at Eastern Michigan University and have swum as a US Masters Swimmer since then. When I was younger, I swam in the pool competitions and over the years have moved into longer events in the pool and then longer events in the open water. HS and college I swam sprints and went to YMCA and Masters Nationals competing in freestyle and butterfly sprints as well as backstroke (which I never swam previously). I liked it because I could get personal bests in events since I had never swum them before. I then tried longer and longer events for the same reason. I've made Long Distance All-American in Masters swimming competing in the 5K, 10K, 3000yd, 6000yd postal events as well as open water national championship events. My best and hardest was 2009 when the 10K open water National Championship was in Harbor Springs and I won my age group that year. More recently I swam around Mackinac Island a few years ago and still have the Mackinac Bridge swim on my bucket list. It is an honor to be a part of this historic swim.