



 ANNA EAMES '13: SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE

By Matt Thomas '00

If you take a quick look at Anna Eames '13, you will likely see a typical Division III athlete who is majoring in biology with hopes of someday starting a career in genetic counseling. But if you dig a little deeper, you will uncover a part of Eames that makes her unique.

Born with Fibular Hemimelia, Eames' right fibula is slightly shorter than her left fibula. On top of that, she has only three toes on her right foot, an abnormal ankle joint, and suffers from hip dysplasia.

Despite undergoing 28 different operations during her lifetime, Eames has not allowed her medical conditions to interfere with her passion for swimming.

"I started swimming originally because it was something I could do that wasn't painful, because running was pretty painful for me," Eames said. "I just ended up loving it and stuck with it. I think it's fun to compete, but swimming is also a good sport for learning life lessons."

After a successful high school swimming career at Hopkins High School, Eames has been a valuable member of the Gustavus women's swimming and diving team, particularly in the grueling 1,650-yard freestyle event.

Last February at the MIAC Championships, Eames took fourth place in the one mile race with a time of 18 minutes and 1.84 seconds.

She added a 10<sup>th</sup> place finish in the 500-yard freestyle event and a 13<sup>th</sup> place showing in the 200-yard butterfly.

Her efforts helped the Gustavus team earn its third straight MIAC Championship.

"Being a part of the Gustavus swimming team has been wonderful," Eames said. "We're a really big team and we're a really close team. Everybody cares about you and our coach Jon Carlson makes sure everyone feels important."

While swimming at Gustavus has been a big part of her life the past three years, Eames has also been competing on the international level since 2005 as a paralympic athlete.

Eames swims in the S10 class for paralympic swimmers, which is designated for those with the mildest forms of disabilities, and she has excelled.

At the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, China, Eames competed in five events and won the gold medal in the 100-meter butterfly S10 and took the bronze medal in the 100-meter freestyle S10 event.

Her time of 1 minute and 9.26 seconds in the 100-meter butterfly set an American record in the S10 class.

"Going to Beijing was everything I could have hoped for. I had never been to that big of a meet with that many spectators," Eames said. "I went in with no expectations and didn't really ever think about winning a gold, but it ended up working out for me."

At the 2010 International Paralympic Committee World Championships in The Netherlands, Eames earned a bronze medal in the 100-meter butterfly event and was later named captain for the U.S. team that swam in the 2011 Pan Pacific Games.



**"WE'RE A REALLY BIG TEAM AND WE'RE A REALLY CLOSE TEAM. EVERYBODY CARES ABOUT YOU."**



## EAMES... WAS ABLE TO MOVE THE TEAM FROM THIRD PLACE TO SECOND PLACE DURING HER 100 METERS.

When the 2011-2012 Gustavus swimming and diving season ended in late March, Eames continued to train with hopes of being named to the U.S. Team for this summer's Paralympic Games in London.

The U.S. Paralympic Swimming Trials took place in mid-June in Bismarck, N.D., and Eames was one of the headliners. She took first place in three events including the 50-meter freestyle, the 100-meter freestyle, and the 100-meter butterfly.

Those performances all but cemented her place on this year's U.S. Paralympic Swim Team which is made up of 20 women and 14 men.

She left for Stuttgart, Germany on August 15 where she and her teammates trained at a U.S. Air Force base for 10 days before departing for the Olympic Village in London.

The opening ceremonies took place on August 29. Eames captured a silver medal on September 3 in the 4x100 meter freestyle relay event.

Eames swam the anchor leg and was able to move the team from third place to second place during her 100 meters. Australia took the gold medal when they set a new world record time at 4:20.39. Eames and the United States finished second with a time of 4:24.57. Great Britain took the bronze with a time 4:24.71.

She also made the finals in two individual events in the Paralympics. She placed eighth in the 50 meter freestyle event with a time of 29.41 seconds and placed sixth in the 100 meter butterfly event with a time of 1:10.57. Eames returned to Minnesota and Gustavus for her senior year on September 11, 2012.

While swimming is took center stage that summer for Eames,



she also found time to do some volunteer work at a battered women's shelter in Minneapolis as a youth advocate. She also gave back to Gillette Children's Hospital – a place she is familiar with – by volunteering in the surgery waiting room.

"Gillette is where I have had all of my surgeries so it's nice to be back there," Eames said.

\*\*\*

*Matt Thomas is the Director of Media Relations and Internal Communication at Gustavus Adolphus College. After graduating from Gustavus in 2000 with degrees in Communication Studies and History, Thomas worked mainly as a sports journalist in the western suburbs of Minneapolis before returning to Gustavus in 2007.*

