

3-30-09

BESHUNSKY,
DORIS DANNENHIRSCH

OBITUARIES

Doris Dannenhirsch Beshunsky, 92, Competitive Swimmer and Coach

Doris Dannenhirsch Beshunsky, 92, a competitive swimmer and coach, died March 30.

Beshunsky began her competitive swimming career in Rhode Island, capturing titles in the 50- and 100-meter freestyle, and also the 100-meter breaststroke, at the New England Junior and Senior Swimming Championships. In 1935, she traveled to Israel (then Palestine) as part of the U.S. team in the second Maccabiah Games.

From 1939-42, Beshunsky and three of her teammates comprised the "Formation Swimmers." They delighted thousands of viewers attending sportsmen shows in cities such as Boston; Providence, R.I.; Cleveland; Philadelphia; and Pittsburgh with their water-ballet presentations. This group was recognized as one of the pioneers and forerunners in what today is known as synchronized swimming, now an Olympic sport.

Beshunsky entered the University of Pennsylvania in 1943 and formed one of the nation's first synchronized swimming clubs, the Penguinettes, in 1946. Beshunsky graduated from Penn with a bachelor's degree in phys-



DORIS BESHUNSKY

eree for swimming and diving competitions.

From 1982-83, she sat on the University of Pennsylvania Athletic Advisory Council and the National Board of the United States Committee Sports for Israel. In recognition for her service, achievement and contributions through aquatics, Beshunsky was inducted into the Rhode Island Aquatic Hall of Fame in 1982 and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Swimming Hall of Fame in 1984.

She was also inducted into the Rhode Island Jewish Hall of Fame as its first female mem-