

Blairwood *SwimAmerica* Coaching Staff

The BEST COACHES ... The BEST TEACHING METHOD... The BEST SWIMMERS !!

Jill Burckle

Jill is the SwimAmerica Program Owner and Director as well as a ASCA Level 2 Certified Coach. Jill received her college education at Indiana University, where she received a BS from the School of Environmental Sciences with an emphasis in Water Resources. Originally from San Anselmo, California, she played Division 1 Tennis at Indiana University on a full scholarship. After graduating Jill relocated to Hilton Head Island as a teaching professional at Shipyard Racquet Club. Upon moving to Louisville in 1983, she became club manager and owner of Mockingbird Valley Tennis Club. Subsequently Jill with her husband purchased Louisville Tennis Club (1997) and Blairwood Tennis, Swim & Fitness Club (2001). Married for 26 years to Chris Burckle they have 3 children: Caroline 25 years old -- a 2008 Olympic Swimmer (Bronze medal), multiple NCAA Swimming Champion & NCAA Record Holder; Clark 23 years old - 2010 USA Swimming National Team Member, 2010 NCAA Swimming Champion & 2012 Olympic hopeful; Collin 14 years old -- a State record holder, member of Kentucky Zone team and a member of Tritons Swim Team .

Jill began the *Blairwood SwimAmerica Swim School* in 2002 and has developed it along with her outstanding coaches, into the *Leading & Best Swim Lesson Program in Louisville*. Blairwood SwimAmerica is where thousands of Summer Club swimmers have learned how to *swim correctly and fast*. The SwimAmerica system of teaching developed by Olympic coaches is the most successful and best teaching system in the world. SwimAmerica has a proven track record of placing numerous swimmers on the Tritons, Lakeside, Cardinal and other local USA year round and High School swim teams every year.

Abraham "Tito" Solano

Head SwimAmerica Stroke School Coach and SwimAmerica Site Supervisor, Tito has been teaching Levels 5-10 since 2002. Tito has swum competitively for over 30 years and coached for 20+ years. His first major coaching job was as an Asst Swim Coach at the University of Louisville (1993-1995) after he finished his intercollegiate career for the Cardinals as the Most Valuable Team Swimmer and Most Valuable Conference Swimmer. He then went on to coach at the Lakeside Swim Team from 1995 to 2003 as age group coach. *Tito's swimming background is literally one for the record books*. From 1984 to 2002 Tito represented his native Ecuador in international competitions all over the globe. Highlights of his career include a 16th place finish at the World Championships in Rio de Janeiro (200 breaststroke) and *5 World Masters Records in the 200 breaststroke*. He has won Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in international/regional games and championships competing for his country. He broke multiple national records in a variety of events during his career: including the breaststroke and the individual medley. He has held Kentucky State Records in the Open 100 and 200 meter breaststroke. As a master swimmer, Tito has broken dozens of Kentucky State Masters records in multiple age groups and more than a handful of US national records.

Tito's most memorable coaching experience was when he coached his country's national team at the US (Texas) World Cup in 1998 and the 2004 World Championships in Indianapolis. His proudest moments as a coach have been: 2 of his former pupils participated at the Olympic Games: Katerina Klepkou represented Greece in 1996 and **Caroline Burckle**, won Bronze for the USA in 2008. Recently, a long time pupil, **Clark Burckle** won the 200 yards breaststroke at the 2010 Division I NCAA Championships competing for the University of Arizona.

Tito obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Minor in Sociology (1993) and received a Master of Science in Social Work (1995) from the University of Louisville. He also completed (2009) a Certification in School Social Work -post graduate specialization at U of L. He has a Rank I in his full time position at the JCPS where he has worked since 1996. He is fully competent in English and Spanish. He is married to Ximena and has two daughters; Camila & Victoria (who swim for Blairwood!)

Mariela Yopez-Bird

SwimAmerica Stroke School Coach and Site Supervisor, Mariela has taught Levels 5-10 since 2002. She is a 2007 graduate of the University of Louisville-JB Speed School of Engineering with a Masters Degree in Computer Engineering and Computer Science.

Mariela has an impressive and deep swimming background as a International World Class Swimmer. She represented her native Ecuador in the 9th Fina World Swimming Championships (Fukuoka, Japan 2001); the 13th Pan American Games (Winnipeg, Canada 1999), the Fina World Cup (New York 2002); South American Championships and the Bolivarian Games (Guayaquil, Ecuador 2001). Mariela still holds the 200 Meter Butterfly National Record for Ecuador, which she set in 2001. She was named Ecuador's Best Swimmer 1996-2000. Prior to coaching at Blairwood, Mariela coached at Lakeside. She is married to Nathan Bird, and works full time at Humana. Her incredible work ethic and love for the sport of swimming keep her teaching our young swimmers in Stroke School on her days off.

Casey Wesh

SwimAmerica and ASCA Level 2 Certified Coach, Casey has been involved in swimming since she was 8 years old. She has coached and taught swimming since she was 16. Casey was the past Head Coach of the Woods of St. Thomas 2005-2009 and helped start Blairwood's summer club team – where she continues to coach. Casey swimming background is accomplished with KY State championships, selected for Southern Zone Team and Sectionals. She attended the US Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Casey has a BS in Elementary Ed Summa Cum Laude from Ohio University, where she also competed on the swim team her freshman year. She also has a masters in School Counseling. Casey is a full time teacher with JCPS.

Annie St. Clair SwimAmerica and ASCA Level 2 Certified Coach, Annie teaches full time at Blairwood with a focus on preschool and grade school Levels 1-10. Annie is a 2004 graduate of Sacred Heart Academy and 2008 Western Kentucky University graduate. At Western she majored in Public Relations and minored in Marketing. Her swimming background is very impressive – Annie held four (4) KY State Records, won 20 State titles and was a member of three (3) KY Zone Teams. Annie loves the water and the sport of swimming and finds it extremely rewarding to pass on her passion by teaching all levels of children and adults how to swim. Annie is engaged and is busy planning her November wedding.

Rebecca “Sterling” Smallwood SwimAmerica and ASCA Level 2 Certified Coach, Sterling focuses her teaching on preschool & grade school Levels 1-6. She has been coaching for Blairwood SwimAmerica since May 2010. Sterling swam for the USA swim team SURF in Biloxi, MS from 1990-98 and the Biloxi High School from 1998-2002. She attended Western Kentucky University where she majored in Finance. Sterling is married with a one year old son. When she isn't coaching SwimAmerica, Sterling is teaching financial education to families. She holds a KY Life Insurance Agent license and securities license.

Catherine Skinner SwimAmerica and ASCA Level 2 Certified Coach, Catherine has been involved in swimming her whole life. Growing up in California, she swam at her local club team and also participated in tennis and field hockey. Catherine is also a certified Aqua Aerobics instructor, Water Safety Instructor, NASM Personal Trainer and a Chek Holistic Lifestyle Coach. She has run countless half marathons and 3 full marathons. Prior to moving back to Kentucky, Catherine was Head Coach of a summer club team with over 100 swimmers. She has two sons; Ben & Henry who were both competitive swimmers.

Stephanie Hall SwimAmerica and ASCA Level 2 Certified Coach levels 2-10. Stephanie graduated from Miami of Ohio Cum-Laude with a double major in Journalism and Spanish. Along with coaching swimming she manages her real estate business and volunteers in numerous foundations. Stephanie began swimming at the age of 5. By the age of 8 Stephanie was had set state records in all four strokes. As a 12 year old Stephanie was ranked #1 in the USA in the 50 Breaststroke. At age 14 she was #1 in the USA in the 100 Breaststroke and qualified for Junior Nationals. Stephanie has held numerous KY State Swimming Records with and still has some today. In High School she swam for Sacred Heart Academy, where she was an All American and State Relay Record Holder with fellow teammate Caroline Burckle. Stephanie loved the team aspect and cheering in high school swimming and found it to be a wonderful experience. She went on to swim at Miami of Ohio. Stephanie was an assistant swim coach at SHA for the 2010-2011 season. Stephanie believes the core values and strong work ethic she learned from swimming four hours a day/six days a week have led to her continued success out of the water.

Jenna Eichhorn SwimAmerica Stroke School Coach, Jenna is native of Russia. She has been coaching in the USA for the past two years. From 2004-2009 she was the Head Swim Coach of the local team in Perm, Russia. Her swimming background is very extensive: Jenna has been a finalist at the Russian Nationals, Gold medalist at Russian Zones as well as winning KY & IN State championships in 1999. Her education is a Masters in Physical Ed from Siberian State Univ. She is presently an Head Age Group Coach with Tritons of Louisville. She is fluent in English and Russian.

Kate Keiffner SwimAmerica Certified Level 1-4, preschool and water adaptation coach, Kate has been teaching swimming to all ages for over 10 years. She also works with special needs populations and triathletes' teaching correct swimming skills. Kate graduated from the University of Louisville with a degree in Sports Medicine/Exercise Science. She also graduated from the University of Louisville with a Dental Hygienist degree. Kate is also a ACSM certified Health Fitness Specialist. She has worked at Blairwood since 2001.

Kristina Heath SwimAmerica Certified Level 1-4, preschool and water adaptation coach, Kristina swam in the Louisville Swim Assoc. as a youth. She graduated from Sacred Heart Academy where she also swam and specialized as a breastroker. Kristina graduated from Indiana university-Bloomington with degrees in Finance and Spanish. She now lives in Louisville where she enjoys swimming, cycling and spending time with her German Shepard. Kristina has worked at Blairwood since 2005