Head coach Eric McIlquham knows the importance of a top-notch education. The former NCAA Champion also made the grade in the classroom, earning a prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship, which he used to earn his Master’s Degree in exercise physiology from the University of Alabama in 1996.

“First and foremost, our athletes are getting first rate educations,” McIlquham said. “They are going to swim fast and dive clean and we are going to win meets, but make no mistake, academics are priority one.”

Alabama’s swimming and diving program is not only talking the talk about achieving a proper balance of education and athletics, it’s walking the walk. Case in point, Mark Jollands earned four All-American honors in the pool and posted the fastest 500 freestyle time in the conference as a senior in 2000. During that same time he posted a 3.96 grade point average, was named one of the athletic department’s Top-6 Senior Scholar-Athletes and earned an SEC Postgraduate Scholarship.

That kind of balance between academic and athletic excellence has been evident throughout the Tide’s history.

The swimming and diving program earned back-to-back-to-back Postgraduate Scholarships in the mid-90s when Amy DeVasher earned one from the NCAA in 1996 and Ann-Sofie Joensson brought an NCAA award back to the Capstone in 1997. Jill DeVasher completed the trifecta in 1998 winning and SEC scholarship, an award also bestowed upon her sister, Amy DeVasher.

Amy DeVasher and Joensson were standout examples of balancing outstanding academics while competing at the highest level. Both women where first team All-Americans in addition to being academic all-stars.

Diver Mark Rourke was Alabama Swimming and Diving’s first NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship winner. In 1991, the five-time SEC Champion and the 1991 NCAA Runner-up off the one-meter, capped off his career by earning the scholarship.

Coach McIlquham’s goal to increase this level of academic success is a lofty one, but he has a formidable ally on his side.

One of the secrets behind the academic success for Tide athletes is Alabama’s Center of Athletic Student Services (CASS), headed by Director of Athletic Academics Jon Dever.

Dever is assisted by Fern Hampton, who works hand in hand with the swimming and diving teams, Brenda Elliott, Cathy Elliott, and Wes Maas. Life Skills Director Karin Lee rounds out the CASS staff. Joining this group are seven graduate assistants and 35 part-time tutors who work in the CASS building adjacent to Bryant Hall. The facility includes 17 study rooms, 33 individual study cubicles, a lecture room and IBM and Macintosh computer labs.

From the moment a recruit first walks on to campus to the moment an athlete graduates with diploma in hand, the academic services provided are outstanding. For the first year at the Capstone, freshmen and junior college transfers are required to attend nightly study halls. After that, attendance is based on the individual’s GPA and study needs.

The CASS staff works as a liaison between the Athletics Department, undergraduate divisions, and administrative office of the university. The staff offers career advice and counseling, makes sure all athletes are maintaining satisfactory progress toward their degrees, and monitors academic eligibility.

The advisors also secure tutors and schedule study sessions.

All of these services begin with the recruit’s first visit. The advisors set up individual appointments within the department of the recruit’s area of study and accompany them to the meeting. They give the recruit a tour of the campus and go over services provided by CASS.

The dedicated CASS staff can only give guidance and direction. Achievement is left in the hands of the student-athlete. If the athlete wishes to succeed in the classroom as they do in competition, then Alabama’s CASS will provide them with every opportunity to achieve their highest goals.
Academic Honor Roll

Alabama’s NCAA and SEC Postgraduate Scholarship Winners

GTE/COSIDA
ACADEMIC ALL-AMERICAN
1998  Jill DeVasher

NCAA POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS
1996  Amy DeVasher
1997  Ann-Sofie Joensson

NCAA FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
2003  Adam Hall

SEC POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP
1996  Amy DeVasher
1996  Jill DeVasher
2000  Mark Jollands

PAUL W. BRYANT STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR
1995  Amy DeVasher
2000  Mark Jollands

XXXI
1995  Amy DeVasher
1997  Jill DeVasher

MORTAR BOARD
1995  Amy DeVasher

ALPHA LAMDA DELTA
1995  Jill DeVasher
2000  Dawn Coy
2002  Michael Pigasou

ALPHA EPSILON RHO
2002  Belinda Green

BETA GAMMA SIGMA
1997  Jill DeVasher
2001  Mark Jollands
2002  Grant Jollands

BLUE KEY
1995  Amy DeVasher

CARDINAL KEY
1996  Jill DeVasher

ETA KAPPA NU
1997  Alex Voris

GAMMA BETA PHI
1996  Dana Bleich
1997  Jen Buffington
1997  Keri Coy
1999  Sara Burns
2000  LAINEE PATTERSON
2001  Chris Flamion
2003  GOLDEN KEY
1996  Josh Luber
1997  Ann-Sofie Joensson
2001  Oren Azrad
2002  Alaina Patterson

KAPPA TAU ALPHA
2001  KERI COY

OMICRON DELTA KAPPA
1994  Amy DeVasher
1997  Jill DeVasher
1998  Keri Coy

PHI BETA KAPPA
1996  Amy DeVasher

PHI ETA SIGMA
1995  Jill DeVasher
1997  Joanna M. Ribeiro
1998  Nora Zhong
1999  Kelly Coellner

PHI KAPPA PHI
1996  Jill DeVasher

PHI MU EPSILON
1996  Ann-Sofie Joensson

SIGMA TAU DELTA
1996  Francine Mathot

DEPT. OF JOURNALISM BUFORD BOONE MEMORIAL ENDED SCHOLARSHIP
2000  Katy Davidson

CAPSTONE COMMUNICATION SOCIETY MEMORIAL ENDED SCHOLARSHIP
2001  Katy Davidson

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES WOODROW DAVIS FAMILY STUDENT-ATHLETE AWARD
1998  Ann-Sofie Joensson

DEPT. OF ECONOMICS FINANCE AND LEGAL STUDIES ECONOMIC FRESHMAN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
1998  Mark Jollands

DEPT. OF ECONOMICS FINANCE AND LEGAL STUDIES ECONOMIC FRESHMAN ACHIEVEMENT
1999  Mark Jollands

INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS OUTSTANDING STUDENT BRANCH AWARD
2002  Oren Azrad

AUSTEN LEGRAND BENNETT III UNDERGRADUATE INITIATIVE SCHOLARSHIPS
2003  JT Jones

LOUIS DROLET LUCKIE MEMORIAL ENDED SCHOLARSHIPS
2003  JT Jones

DEPT. OF OF MARKETING RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE IN SCHOLARSHIP
1998  Dana Bleich
1999  Sarah Burns
2000  Brooke Donoho
2001  Brooke Donoho
2003  Charles Reeves

OUTSTANDING FINANCE UNDERGRADUATES
2002  Kat Bortenlanger
2003  Kat Bortenlanger

PROTECTIVE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY INC. ENDOWED UNDERGRADUATE INITIATIVE SCHOLARSHIPS
2003  JT Jones

PEARCE BEVILL LEESBURG & MOORE ACCOUNTING SCHOLARSHIPS
2003  Jeff Smith

ECONOMICS FRESHMAN ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
2003  Guido Arroyo
Academic All-SEC

Women

1984
Carol Landry
Kim Nicholson

1985
Ellen McGrath
Kim Nicholson

1986
Anna Doig
Donna Jean Sheets

1987
Anna Doig

1988
Charlotte Brock
Tami Merrill

1990
Katherine Newland
Katie Williams
Susan Bartholomew
Dorie Portela

1991
Meg Bonella
Jana Korsch

1992
Susan Bartholomew
Sis Burovac
Jana Korsch
Sofie Rylander
Nathalie Dietiker

1993
Nathalie Dietiker
Rita Garay
Stacy Gillies
JoDee Lake
Helga Sigurdardottir
Jill Tappen
Teri Williams

1994
Amy DeVasher
Stacy Gillies
Anna Lindberg
Katherine Rhodes
Helga Sigurdardottir
Jill Tappen
Kari Taylor

1995
Dana Bleich
Amy DeVasher
Stacy Gillies
Ann-Sofie Joensson
Anna Lindberg
April Mathis
Francine Mathot
Jill Tappen
Kari Taylor

1996
Dana Bleich
Amy DeVasher
Jill DeVasher
Maria Elm
Monica Geohagen
Sarah Hickinbotham
Ann-Sofie Joensson
Laura Lloyd
Francine Mathot
Jenny Siegart
Kari Taylor

1997
Tina Andersson
Tiffany Berry
Dana Bleich
Jenny Buffington
Keri Coy
Jill DeVasher
April Dudley
Rania Elwani
Monica Geohagen
Sarah Hickinbotham
Ann-Sofie Joensson
Anna Lindberg
Laura Lloyd
Francine Mathot

1998
Jenny Buffington
Sarah Burns
Keri Coy
Jill DeVasher
Brooke Donoho
Karen Jones
Laura Lloyd
Nora Zhong

1999
Jen Buffington
Sarah Burns
Keri Coy
Jill DeVasher
Brooke Donoho
Emily Donohue

2000
Sarah Burns
Keri Coy
Jill DeVasher
Brooke Donoho
Emily Donohue
Belinda Green

2001
Katy Davidson
Holly McCleless
Lainee Patterson
Katherine Bortenlanger
Christine Menendez
Keri Coy
Emily Donohue
Belinda Green
Marcy Warriner

2002
Lisa Andersson
Kat Bortenlanger
Catalina Casaru
Kathryn Davidson
Belinda Green
Meghan Lynch
Elizabeth McGiffin
Alaina Patterson
Anne Poleska
Ann Ross
Marcy Warriner

2003
Katherine Bortenlanger
Kathryn Hallquist
Alison Lafefers
Meghan Lynch
Elizabeth McGiffin
Alaina Patterson
Anne Poleska
Crystal Rasmussen
Ann Ross
Ginny Trott
Candace Weiman

Men

1984
Filberto Colon
Brendan Moynihan

1985
Donald Berger
Filberto Colon
Thorbjorn Karlsson
Ricardo Valdivia

1986
Donald Berger
Filberto Colon
Thorbjorn Karlsson
Enrique Romero
Ricardo Valdiva

1987
Jens-Peter Berntt
Thorbjorn Karlsson
Ricardo Valdivia

1988
Craig Ammon

1990
Mark Rourke
Craig Ammon

1991
Darren Brudos
Mark Rourke
Jamey Myers

1992
Jamey Myers
Juan Lopez

1993
Darren Brudos
Peter Doig
Jamey Myers
Juan Lopez
David Strassburg

1994
Craig Devitt
Peter Doig
Alex Hermeto
Nicos Papadopoulos
Rick Richmond
David Strassburg
Alex Voris

1995
Craig Devitt
Mike Lamoth
Josh Lubo
Adam McBride
Rick Richmond
David Strassburg
Brian Tribble
Alex Voris

1996
Mike Lamoth
Josh Lubo
Adam McBride
Russell McDowell
Joaquim Ribeiro
Alex Voris

1997
Josh Lubo
Adam McBride
Marc Schrader

1998
Mark Jollands
Matt Pendleton

1999
Oren Azrad
Mark Jollands
Matt Pendleton
Alan Rose

2000
Oren Azrad
Mark Jollands
Matt Pendleton
Alan Rose

2001
Oren Azrad
Grant Jollands
Charles Reeves
TJ Wolters

2002
Christopher Hamilton
Grant Jollands
Evan Mueller
Michael Pigassou
Charles Reeves
Jeffrey Smith
Stewart Smith
Scott Weaver
James Wilcox

2003
Spiros Bitsakis
Darren Erasmus
Adam Hall
J.T. Jones
Vlad Polyakov
Charles Reeves
Jeffrey Smith
Stewart Smith
Frank Southon
Apostolis Tsagkarakis
James Wilcox
Ben Worby
CHAMPS

The NCAAs Life Skills Program

In an era when athletes are scrutinized as much for their off-the-field actions as for their on-the-field accomplishments, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has stepped to the forefront of the issue and developed a program to assist its student-athletes.

The NCAA in a partnership with the Division I-A Athletic Directors’ Association created the CHAMPS/Life Skills program in an effort to enhance the athletic and personal responsibility of student-athletes. With the NCAA providing the educational programming, resources and training, and Division I-A Directors providing marketing, leadership and funding assistance, the program is now in place to enhance the total development of students participating in intercollegiate athletics.

“Among all of intercollegiate athletics’ responsibilities, there is none more important than providing the tools for the total development of the student-athlete,” said Cedric W. Dempsey, executive director of the NCAA.

One of the keys of success for the Tide program has been the work of Karin Lee, the Director of the Life Skills Program. Lee, along with the coaching staffs, has been the driving force behind the increase of community involvement by Crimson Tide student-athletes. She plans and organizes community service opportunities as well as plans workshops and speakers to help educate Alabama’s athletes on sports related issues.

“The Life Skills program is a win-win situation,” said Lee. “I only see positive benefits. This plan gives our student-athletes a chance to give back to the community, and allows them the opportunity to create a positive image for the children. The face-to-face interaction with the community provides our athletes with a sense of worth and accomplishment. The program also brings enjoyment and resources.”

CHAMPS, an acronym for Challenging Athletes’ Minds for Personal Success, consists of five components - athletic commitment, academic commitment, career development, personal development and community service.

In meeting the career development needs of Crimson Tide athletes, the athletic department has developed “1st & 10 Career Day”, an annual event for Alabama student-athletes which brings 60-70 successful business leaders to campus for a job fair. In addition, the department has also held an “Agents Day” program in which football, men’s basketball and women’s basketball players met and discussed professional playing options with a Player Personnel representative from the NFL, an attorney and former Alabama athletes now playing professional sports.

In addition, Alabama athlete’s personal development was addressed with several department sponsored events including programs on gambling, media relations, nutrition, health decisions and sexual responsibility.

This past year, Alabama student-athletes participated in a variety of community service programs. Through the auspices of the LifeSkills program, Alabama athletes led clothing drives for the Salvation Army, worked in soup kitchens for Hunger and Homelessness Week, participated in the American Heart Association’s Heart Walk and led the “Beat Auburn” food drive. From raising money for Project Angel Tree to speaking engagements at elementary schools, Crimson Tide athletes have been shining examples in the community.

“I have seen the life skills program grow every year since I have been here,” Lee said. “Athletes have participated in over 1000 hours of community outreach each year and it continues to increase. I know the life skills program benefits all who participate, because the athletes always come back after volunteering with a group or school and want to do more. The program is not mandatory, but we have so many athletes that want to participate because they want to give back to the community.”

Whole teams and individual athletes have heard the call “to give something back” and they have answered with their time, talents and commitment.

“I believe this program helps the student-athlete see their responsibility to the community,” Associate Athletics Director for Student Services Kevin Almond said. “It helps them see that they are a role model to youngsters in whatever they do. I feel that this is an important and integral part of their education.”

The program is not mandatory, but we have so many athletes that want to participate because they want to give back to the community.”

-Karin Lee, Director of Life Skills Program
Like Yogi Berra said, it was "deja vu all over again," for Stefan Gherghel last March. After successfully defending his Southeastern Conference 200 butterfly title, Gherghel found himself at the NCAA Championships with a chance to become the first Alabama swimmer to successfully repeat as an NCAA Champion.

Gherghel won the 2002 title by blistering the field over the last 25 yards, passing four others on the way to reaching the wall first. He set a new school record in the process, bettering the mark former Olympic Champion Jon Sieben set in 1985. He also became the third fastest man in the history of the event behind Olympic champions Pablo Morales and Melvin Stewart. And for good measure he shattered the pool record at Georgia’s Gabrielson Natatorium.

In the spirit of deja vu, Gherghel again blasted from behind in 2003, this time using the last 50 yards to surge to the front of the pack. The Baia Mare, Romania native was again fifth going into the last 50, trailing the leader by more than three-quarters of a second and again winning by more the two-tenths of a second. He lowered his own school record to 1:42.35, leaving Arizona’s Juan Veloz in second place.

For Gherghel, it was the perfect ending to a stellar Crimson Tide career, in addition to his second individual title, he led Alabama to a 12th place team finish in 2003. He holds the school records in the 100 and 200 butterfly and is ranked in the Tide’s all-time top-10 in the 200 freestyle and 100 backstroke.
Sixteen times a member of the Crimson Tide Swimming and Diving team has stood at the top of the awards stand as a collegiate national champion. The events range from the 50 freestyle to the 1650 freestyle and from one-meter diving to the 10-meter platform.

Jonty Skinner won the first title in 1975, winning the 100 freestyle in his freshman campaign, setting an NCAA record in the process (43.92). Christina Jarvis and Vicky Stanley won titles in 1976. Jarvis won the AIAW 100 and 200 breaststroke championships setting a U.S. Open record in the 100 breaststroke. Stanley won the AIAW 50 freestyle crown, setting an AIAW record with her performance. In 1977 Jarvis became the first Alabama swimmer to repeat as national champion when she successfully defended her 100 and 200 breaststroke titles and added the 50 breaststroke crown to her haul.

The 1977 season also saw Casey Converse better the American and NCAA record in the 1650 freestyle on his way to the awards stand. Converse became the first swimmer to break the 15 minute mark in the 1650 freestyle with his national championship swim of 14:57.30. Wayne Chester became the Tide’s first diving champion in 1978 winning the one-meter diving title. Carlos Berrocal brought the 1979 100 backstroke crown to the Capstone while Arne Borgstrom earned Alabama’s first title of the 1980’s when he won the 1982 1650 freestyle. It seemed that Alabama owned the breaststroke in 1983 when Angelika Knipping won the women’s 50 breaststroke title and Glenn Mills won the men’s 200 breaststroke title.

Diver Brent Roberts added to the Crimson Tide legacy of champions winning the 10-meter platform in 1998 and in 2002, Stefan Gherghel posted the third fastest time in the history of the 200 butterfly to win the first of back-to-back NCAA titles.
Eleven Summer Olympiads have come to pass during the 40 plus year history of Alabama swimming, and the Crimson Tide has been represented at all of them. Of the 10 Olympic Games at which the Tide had representatives, nine have resulted in at least one medal. Former Alabama diving coach Bob Webster was a two time Olympic champion, winning the 1960 and 1964 platform diving gold medal. Jack Babashoff was the first Alabama swimmer to bring back a medal when he earned a silver medal in the 100 freestyle.

In Sydney, Australia, the Crimson Tide was represented by 2001 senior Oren Azrad who represented his native Israel. Former Tide great Rafael Alvarez, the SEC Diver of the Year in 1995, represented Spain in his second Olympiad. School record holder Rania Elwani swam for Egypt while All-American sprinter Stavros Michaelides swam for Cyprus. 2000 All-American Glen Walshaw swam the sprint events for Zimbabwe. And before they took their first swims for the Crimson Tide, sophomore Anne Poleska and freshman Stefan Gherghel were representing their countries (Germany and Romania respectively) in Sydney.

In addition to the athletes in Sydney, former Alabama swimmer, assistant coach and head coach Jonty Skinner was making his second Olympic trip as a coach on the U.S. staff, reprising the assistant role he first earned in 1996.

The Tide had the most representatives at the 1984 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. Twenty Alabama swimmers and divers would compete in Los Angeles. The 1984 Olympics also saw former Tide mentor Don Gambril serve as head coach of one of the most successful U.S. Olympic squads in history.

In 1992, Jon Olsen was the mainstay of the U.S. relay squads, anchoring both the 400 free and medley relays to gold medals and the 800 free relay team to a bronze. Along with teammates Jeff Rouse, Nelson Diebel and Pablo Morales, Olsen swam to a world record finish in winning the 400 medley relay. The fastest man in the history of the Crimson Tide, Olsen’s leg on the U.S.’s 400 freestyle relay stands as one of the fastest in the history of the sport. Olsen came back for another taste of Olympic glory in 1996. Elected captain of the United States squad by his peers, Olsen swam to double gold as part of the 400 and 800m freestyle relays. With a total of five Olympic medals, four of which shine gold, Olsen is the Tide’s most successful Olympian.
1972 — Munich
Robin Backhaus, United States • Silver Medal - 200m fly
Mark Crocker, Hong Kong
Colin Herring, New Zealand
Jacques Leloup, Belgium

1976 — Montreal
Jack Babashoff, United States • Silver Medal - 100m free
Carlos Berrocal, Puerto Rico
Casey Converse, U.S.
Mark Crocker, Hong Kong
Christina Jarvis, Great Britain
Mark Tonelli, Australia
Jeff Van de Graaf, Australia

1980 — Moscow
*Arne Borgstrom, Norway
*Cameron Henning, Canada
Marcello Juca, Brazil
Max Metzger, Australia • Bronze Medal - 1500m free
*Glenn Mills, U.S.
Mark Tonelli, Australia • Gold Medal - 400m medley relay

1984 — Los Angeles
Ricardo Aldabe, Spain
Laurence Bensimon, France
*Peter Berndt, East Germany
Katrine Bomstad, Norway
Carole Brooke, Switzerland

1988 — Seoul
Peter Berndt, West Germany
Rita Garay, Puerto Rico
Ragga Runolfsdottir, Iceland

1992 — Barcelona
Rita Garay, Puerto Rico
Stavros Michaelides, Cyprus
Jon Olsen, United States • Gold Medal - 400m & 800m free relays
Ellen (McGrath) Owen, United States • Finalist
Mark Rourke, Canada • Finalist
Ragga Runolfsdottir, Iceland
Helga Sigurdardottir, Iceland

1996 — Atlanta
Rafael Alvarez, Spain
Rania Elwani, Egypt
Stavros Michaelides, Cyprus
Jon Olsen, United States • Gold Medal - 400m & 800m free relays
(United States Captain)

2000 — Sydney
Oren Azrad, Israel
Rafael Alvarez, Spain
Spiros Bitsakis, Greece
Rania Elwani, Egypt
Stefan Gherghel, Romania
Stavros Michaelides, Cyprus
Anne Poleska, Germany
Glen Walshaw, Zimbabwe

* Made countries Olympic Team, but country boycotted the Games
In 1975, then head coach Don Gambril decided to create the Alabama Swimming Hall of Fame to honor those Alabama swimmers, divers and related personnel who had made outstanding contributions to the Crimson Tide program through superb performances.

Former head coach and Tide swimming legend Jonty Skinner was the first member to be inducted into the Hall of Fame on the strength of his NCAA national championship and his world record, both in the 100 free. Last season, Stefan Gherghel became the latest inductee when he swam the third fastest 200 butterfly time in the history of the event to win the NCAA title.

An Athlete must meet one of six requirements to be eligible for induction:
1. AIAW or NCAA champion in an individual event.
2. Member of the U.S. Olympic Team
3. Finalist at the Olympic Games
4. Member of the U.S. World Championship Team
5. Finalist at the World Championships
6. Pan-American or Pan-Pacific Games individual medalist

In addition to those picked by the above criteria, one athlete is chosen for each decade as “The Athlete of the Decade,” for outstanding contribution to the University of Alabama Swimming and Diving Team. Since Skinner became the first inductee in 1975, the Hall of Fame has grown to 32 members.

Jonty Skinner — 1975
First member of the Hall of Fame • Earned the first individual NCAA championship in Alabama’s swimming history • His time of 43.92 in the 100 freestyle on March 29, 1975 in Cleveland, Ohio, set an NCAA record and U.S. Open record • Set a world record in 1976 in the 100 freestyle • Served as the Tide’s head coach from 1991-94.

Jack Babashoff — 1976
Earned a silver medal in the 100 meter freestyle and a gold medal as part of the U.S. 400 freestyle relay at the 1976 Olympics • Gold medalist at the 1975 Pan American games • Four year All-American.

Christina Jarvis — 1976
Won a total of five AIAW titles, winning the 100 and 200 breaststroke in 1976 and the 50, 100 and 200 breaststroke in 1977 • She set the U.S. open record in 1976 in the 100 meter breaststroke • AIAW record holder in the 200 breaststroke, 2:18.79 • U.S. open and AIAW record holder in the 100 breaststroke, 1:04.56.

Casey Converse — 1977
Set an NCAA record and became the first man in swimming history to break the 15 minute barrier on his way to winning the 1650 freestyle when he went 14:57.30 on March 26, 1977 in Cleveland, Ohio • Also held the NCAA record in the 1000 freestyle • Participated in the 1976 Olympics.

Vickey Stanley — 1977
1976 AIAW champion in the 50 freestyle, her winning effort set an AIAW record in that event.

Mike Curington — 1978
Won three gold medals at the 1975 Pan Am Games • Won four gold medals at the 1977 World University Games in addition to being a four-year All-American.

Wayne Chester — 1978
Became the first Alabama diver to win a NCAA title, taking the one-meter board at the 1978 NCAA championships.

Carlos Berrocal — 1979
Won the 1979 NCAA 100 backstroke title • Earned a fourth-place finish at the 1976 Olympic Games in the 100 backstroke.

Mark Tonelli — 1979
Finaled in the 200 backstroke at the 1976 Olympic Games for Australia • Won the gold at the 1980 Olympic games as part of Australia’s 400 medley relay • Former SEC record holder in the 200 backstroke • 1979 200 backstroke runner-up at the NCAA Championships.

John Foster — 1980
The Crimson Tide’s first coach • From 1960 to 1973 he compiled 123-48 record in dual meet competition.

Arne Borgstrom — 1982
Won the 1982 NCAA 1650 freestyle title • Named the 1982 SEC Swimmer of the Year • Named 1982 Alabama Athlete of the Year • Earned All-America honors four consecutive years • First man to swim faster than 15 minutes in winning the 1650 freestyle at the SEC Championships.

Angelika Knipping — 1983
Won the NCAA 50 breaststroke title on the way to setting a collegiate record in that event which still stands • Won three SEC titles and earned All-America honors 13 times.

Glenn Mills — 1983
Won the NCAA 200 breaststroke title • Member of the 1980 U.S. Olympic team • Also a member of the 1982 U.S. World Championship Team.

Don Gambril — 1984
Head Coach of the 1984 U.S. Olympic Team in Los Angeles • Head coach of the 1983 U.S. Pan-American squad • Head coach of the 1991 U.S. World Championship Team • First individual recipient of U.S. Swimming Award.
Bob Webster — 1985
Won gold medals in platform diving in the 1960 and 1964 Olympics • Earned SEC Diving Coach of the Year, four times • Coached an NCAA champion and 10 SEC champions.

Marcello Juca — 1985
Won three medals at the 1983 Pan-American Games • Three-time All-American • Member of the 1984 Brazilian Olympic Team.

Jens-Peter Berndt — 1987
World record holder in the 400 IM • Finalist at the 1988 Olympic Games • Two time SEC champion.

Ralph Wright — 1988
Alabama Swimmer of the 1960’s, Three year Most Valuable Swimmer • 1968 SEC Most Valuable Swimmer • Five time SEC champion • Held four SEC records during his career.

Jon Olsen — 1991
Five time SEC Champion • 1991 NCAA Championship 100 freestyle runnerup • 50, 100 and 200 freestyle Alabama school record holder • Four year MVP for the Tide • Member of the 1991 & 1994 U.S. World Championship team • Goodwill Games gold medalist • 1991 Pan-Pacific Games gold medalist • 1992 Olympic 400 medley and freestyle relay gold medalist and 800 freestyle relay bronze medalist • World record holder as part of the U.S.’s 400 medley relay • Captain of the 1993 U.S. Pan Pacific squad • Four time gold medalist at the 1993 Pan Pacific Games • 50 and 100 freestyle and the 400 freestyle and medley relays • Inaugural U.S. Resident National Team member • 1996 Olympic double gold medalist, 400 and 800 freestyle relays • Voted 1996 Olympic team captain by his peers.

Mark Rourke — 1991
Finalist at the 1984 Olympics representing Canada in the platform event • Four time SEC champion • At the 1991 SEC Championships, became the first diver in SEC history to win all three diving events • School and SEC record holder for the one-meter diving event • Runner-up at the 1991 NCAA Championships in the one-meter diving event • Finalist at the 1992 Olympic Games off the three-meter board.

Ellen (McGrath) Owen — 1992
Member of the 1992 U.S. Olympic Diving Team • Finalized off the platform at the 1992 Games • 1985 SEC Champion off the three-meter board • Academic All-SEC in 1985 • two time All-America.

Stefan Gherghel — 2002
Won back-to-back NCAA 200 butterfly titles, making him the first Alabama swimmer to repeat as NCAA champion • Posted the third fastest time in the history of the 200 butterfly behind only Pablo Morales and Melvin Stewart • Won the SEC 200 butterfly in 2002 and 2003.

Jeff Wade — 1992
Swimmer of the 1970’s • Anchored the 800 freestyle relay at the 1970 NCAA Championships which earned Alabama’s first All-American honors • 1970 Academic All-America • Three year team MVP and three year Captain • Five time SEC champion • Three individual titles and two relay titles • Three time All-SEC • Held the SEC record in the 200 IM, 200 backstroke and 800 freestyle.

Greg Higgison — 1992
Swimmer of the 1980’s • Total of 12 All-America honors from 1980 to 1983 • Five time individual SEC Champion • Winner of the 1982 Commissioners Trophy • Member of the 1982 SEC Championship team • Three year All-SEC.

Kim Nicholson — 1992
Swimmer of the 1980’s • Total of 23 All-America honors from 1982 to 1985 • Seven SEC titles, four individual titles and three relay wins • 1984 and 1985 Academic All-SEC • Member of the 1985 SEC Championship team.

Rafael Alvarez — 1996

Brent Roberts — 1998
Won the 1998 NCAA 10-meter platform title • Member of the 1998 U.S. World Championship Team • 1997 and 1998 Southeastern Conference Diver of the Year • Two SEC titles • Earned eight first team All-American and three honorable mention All-American honors.

Stacy Potter — 2000
Swimmer of the 1990’s • NCAA Runner-up in the 100 butterfly in 1995 • 1995 SEC 100 butterfly champion • Earned 12 first team All-American honors and 10 honorable mention All-American honors • Set the 50 and 100 freestyle school records • Still holds the 100 butterfly and backstroke school records • SEC Record holder in the 100 butterfly • Swam on the school record 200 and 400 freestyle relays and 200 and 400 medley relays.

Travis Myers — 2000
Swimmer of the 1990’s • NCAA Runner-up in the 100 breaststroke in 1994 • 1992 SEC 100 breaststroke champion • Earned 6 first team All-American honors and 7 honorable mention All-American honors • Swam on the school record 200 freestyle and 400 medley relays
Alabama’s Diving Excellence

It is a tradition that is as long as it is proud. For the last 25 years, the Alabama diving crew has accumulated the Southeastern Conference’s finest reputation, earning the league’s highest honors again and again.

Alabama divers have earned Southeastern Conference “Diver of the Year” honors ten times, by far the best total in the league. Since 1981, Alabama coaches have earned SEC “Diving Coach of the Year” nine times, once again best in the conference and again, no other squad comes close.

In 1981, The Crimson Tide enjoyed a sweep of sorts when Barbara Logan was named the female SEC Diver of the Year, Wayne Chester won the award on the men’s side and their mentor, coach Bob Webster, won the first of three SEC Diving coach of the Year awards. Four years earlier, as a freshman, Chester won the Crimson Tide’s first NCAA Diving championship when he took top honors off the one-meter board.


The 1988 season marked the advent of coach Pat Greenwell and a continuation of the Tide’s good diving fortune. Green well has seen four of his charges Ed Morse - 1990, Mark Rourke – 1991, Rafael Alvarez – 1995 and Brent Roberts – 1997 and 1998, named SEC Diver of the Year. Green well himself has been named the league’s top coach four times, 1990, 91, 95 and 97. In addition being named the SEC’s best diver, Roberts also captured the 1997 NCAA 10-meter diving title.

The platform diving event was added to the conference slate in 1989 and Alabama proceeded to win the first three titles, with Rourke winning the inaugural title and the 1991 title and Morse winning the 1990 platform championship. Rourke pulled off another first in 1991, when he became the first SEC diver to win all three diving events, one-meter, three-meter and platform, in the same season.

Alabama divers have won 28 SEC crowns since Chester won the first in 1978, taking top honors on the one-meter board. Senior Lane Bassham won the latest title in 2002 when she took top honors off the three-meter board. Junior Stewart Smith was named SEC Freshman Diver of the Year in 2002 an honor that J.R Hillis earned last season.

And so Alabama’s diving excellence continues, dive by dive, year by year.
The Alabama Aquatic Center has, during the past two decades, gained a reputation for housing one of the fastest pools not only in the Southeastern Conference, but in the nation.

And now that pool bears the name of the man who spearheaded its construction. Don Gambril, long-time Alabama mentor and head coach of the 1984 United States Olympic Team, saw the competition pool of the aquatic center from plans to completion and then saw the Crimson Tide’s home become one of the toughest places in the nation for an opposing team to come in and win. And just before the 2002, in a dedication ceremony, the pool where he ruled became The Don Gambril Olympic Pool.

The home of the Crimson Tide received not just a face lift but a full blown renovation in the fall of 1996 bringing the facility back to the standard of excellence that it has enjoyed through the years.

The $1.2 million renovation included the following changes:

- A new pool surface
- Office space was added for coaches and administration.
- The men’s and women’s locker rooms were redone with tile floors and new lockers
- The staff locker rooms were totally redone.
- The pool was painted and tiled.
- The facility’s light fixtures were changed.
- A new sound system was installed.

Before the 2002 season, the lobby of the aquatic center was converted into a Hall of Fame which housed the University of Alabama Swimming and Diving Hall of Fame (see pages 80-81) but also mementos and informational displays of Alabama’s past and present, making it one of the nicest presentations of a program in the nation.

One thing that has not changed is the facilities reputation as one of the fastest pools in the country. One of the testaments to augment this claim occurred when Martin Zubero set a world record in the 200 meter backstroke (1:56.57) during the 1992 Rammer Jammer Invitational.

It was not the first time that Zubero has had a ‘good’ time at the Alabama Aquatic Center, he set a U.S. Open record in the 200 yard backstroke (1:43.40) at the SEC Championships in 1990.

Further proof was offered by the legendary Tracy Caulkins a short time after the pool opened. Caulkins set two American records at the Aquatic Center.

The Crimson Tide has built an impressive reputation for winning in the Aquatic Center. Since the facility opened in 1981 the Crimson Tide men’s team has only lost a handful of home dual meets. Of the three SEC Championships the Tide won in the decade of the ’80’s, two, the 1982 and 1987 men’s...
The Aquatic Center's main competition pool is 25-yards by 50-meters and is 6.5 feet deep at its shallowest point, 18 feet at its deepest. When set up for long course competition, the pool boasts eight nine-foot wide lanes, and when set-up for short course, the pool can accommodate up to 17 nine-foot wide lanes.

The main pool has four diving boards - two one-meter and two three-meter - and a five and ten-meter platform off which the Tide divers compete.

The main competition venue seats 1,500, every seat of which is often taken during invitational and championship swimming and diving meets.

In addition to the main competition course, the Aquatic Center has an eight lane 25-yard pool. The Aquatic Center also contains a complete weight room, dryland training areas and meeting rooms, all utilized by the Alabama swimmers in their training.

Since opening its doors in 1981 the Aquatic Center has played host to more than 170 swimming competitions including some of the most prestigious in the sport.

The Alabama Aquatic Center is located at the corner of Paul W. Bryant Drive and Hackberry Lane.