

# VIENNA *Living*



## Bob York: THE LOGO SAYS IT ALL

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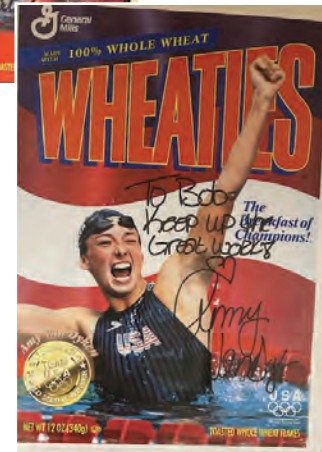


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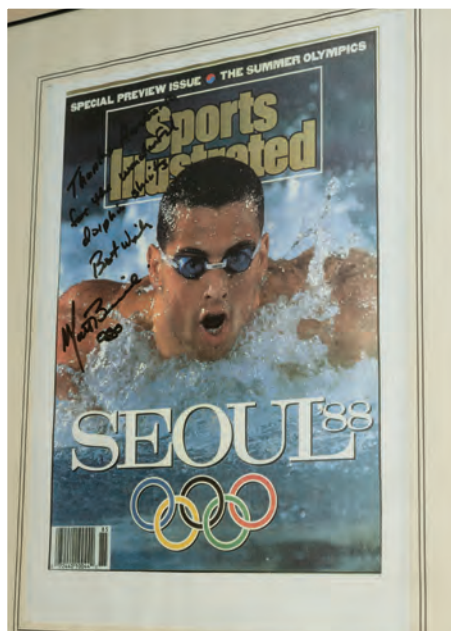


## The Man Who Designed the USA Women's & Men's Swim Team Logo (and more) for Decades

BY CATHERINE HARDMAN  
PHOTOS BY MAURICIO CORDEIRO PHOTOGRAPHY

The temperatures this summer are brutally high, this is the third hottest summer on record - What a great time to watch the Summer Olympics in Paris! Thousands of families with kids who belong to the Vienna Aquatic Club, Vienna Woods and so many swim clubs in the Northern Virginia/DC area will be glued to their TV watching the women's swim team, the divers, and other aquatic events. Hundreds of those people have memories of their coach, Vienna resident Bob York.

Bob's influence as a swim coach in this area is voluminous, but Bob York also has left an everlasting mark on the USA Olympics, especially the women's swim team, since 1988. He was the owner of Aardvark Swim & Sport for 33 years and the logo designer for the USA Olympic



swim team for 30 years. Bob's memories and stories of designing logos and printing swimsuits and skull caps are abundant. Some of the more fantastically entertaining stories are included in this article.

Starting with the **1988 SEOUL OLYMPICS**, Aardvark Swim & Sport printed for Speedo the first speed suits for the USA Olympic Swim Team. The Seoul Olympics showcased the "Paper Suit," which received its name for being very light, thinly woven and felt like paper. Aardvark designed and printed the first USA logo which went on all the Olympians' suits.

### 1996 ATLANTA OLYMPICS

Speedo developed a new fabric, first the S-2000 which was produced in a high neck version for the first time and used at





the World Championships the year before, which Aardvark printed. For the Atlanta Olympics, Speedo came out with the Aquablade suit, a lighter fabric with vertical lines in the suit. Speedo asked Aardvark to develop a new USA logo for the suits, using the American flag. The athletes in these suits were seen on the cover of USA Today and Wheaties boxes after their great successes in Atlanta. USA Swimming and USA Diving all wore the suits.

#### 2000 SYDNEY OLYMPICS

Speedo again developed a revolutionary new technical fabric, calling it Fastskin and saying it closely resembled sharkskin, one of the fastest ocean dwellers. Test fabric was sent to Aardvark to see if it could be printed on. After some research and development, Aardvark found a way to achieve a printing method that worked on the new material. These were also the first leg and full bodysuits. Upon testing

the suits (the originals were all black - the new Olympic suits would be royal, red & black) on athletes at a meet eight weeks before the Olympics, the results were overwhelming.

#### 2004 ATHENS OLYMPICS

Speedo introduced the FastSkin II (FSII), which quickly became the "in" suit. Under the tightest production schedule ever to produce and provide in time for the Olympics, there wasn't time to print these suits here. Because of the amount of time needed to make each suit, they were made in Europe and sent directly to Greece.

#### 2005 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - MONTREAL, CANADA

The FSII was used (navy, red & gray) with a new USA Swimming logo, which said "USA Swimming National Team". Aardvark also designed two USA Swim

t-shirts for the team: one for the swimmers and one for the travelling parents and officials. Aardvark produced the suits and t-shirts and delivered to Montreal in three days.

#### 2007 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - AUSTRALIA



The FS Pro was introduced and was a much lighter material that actually molded itself to the swimmer's body. Easy to print on.

*Continued on page 8*

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### 2008 BEIJING CHINA OLYMPICS

The LZR was unveiled, creating quite a stir. One month before the Olympics, multiple records were broken wearing the suit at Olympic trials and mass production began making it necessary to produce and print the USA suits in Europe and send directly to China.

### 2009 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - ROME, ITALY

Aardvark was given sample LZR suits to see if they could find a way to print on the new material. After 3 months of printing and testing, the newly printed suits that were test worn by multiple swimmers here in Virginia were a success & delivered.

### 2011 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - DUBAI

Aardvark printed the Speedo Elite jammers & female Speedo Elite suits with the American Flag logo & delivered them to USA Swim.

### 2012 LONDON OLYMPICS

Aardvark printed the Speedo FS3 & LZR

Elite suits (a much heavier suit than the Aquablade) with the USA logo.

If those stories didn't pique your interest, Aardvark also printed all of the suits for the TV show "Baywatch" and swim caps for The Discovery Channel's "Shark Week."

Bob York is a driven and determined man – and always has been. Born in Washington, DC, Bob grew up in the Rose Hill neighborhood in Alexandria. He was a baseball player foremost, and



he swam in the Northern Virginia Swim League (NVSL) from 1959 to 1961; at the same time, Bob decided he couldn't leave baseball completely. At the age of 16, he began his eventual career as a coach. He was an assistant coach for the Rose Hill Angels, a team that was in a 12 team "t-shirt" league, meaning they didn't have full official little league uniforms. Bob took this new opportunity quite seriously and expected quite a bit from his players, even though they weren't much younger than he was (ages 12 and under). He started training them in January and even had the boys shovel and clear the baseball field if it snowed. The Rose Hill Angels did not disappoint him, they won their first game 56-0 in two and a half innings, won the league and were moved up to become a sponsored team with uniforms in 1971.

Only a few years later, Bob started his first swim coaching job and worked the whole time he attended American University. It took seven years because of his work ethic, but he paid for his education

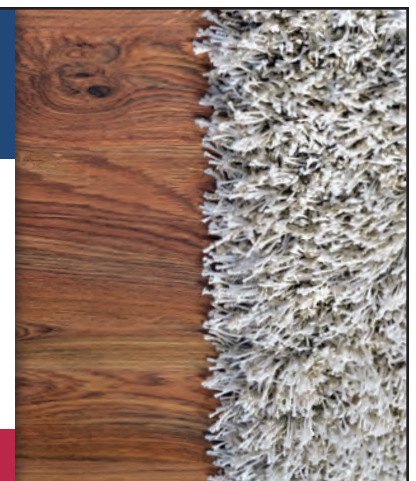


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and received a degree in Administrative Justice. As fate would have it, his degree did not match his true passions (for so many of us, too). Instead, he coached senior and junior clubs in basketball, baseball, and swimming in Arlington, Chantilly and other Northern Virginia towns. He even was a coach at Annandale High School, Bishop Ireton and Yorktown High School. Also, beginning in 1980, he coached Overlee swim team in NVSL Division I for eight years losing only one meet and one all-star relay championship – his last meet. He then retired from summer league coaching to focus on his businesses, York Swim Club and Aardvark.

In 1981, Bob advanced his professional talents as a coach, manager, and entrepreneur and founded York Swim Club of Northern Virginia. York Swim Club is a member of the Potomac Valley Swimming Local Swim Committee (LSC). The goal was to provide a winter training program for local swimmers who wished to continue swimming during the school year. They believed that swimming

was one of the very best ways to develop a healthy body and mind. The foundation of the Club was to offer a positive, low-pressure environment that encouraged each swimmer and her/his academic life. When he formed the club, he coached 39 kids 8:30-9:30 PM. Today, Bob York is the President, CEO, and owner (for 44 years) and the Club has 850 swimmers and they rent out four indoor local pools year-round.

Besides York Swim Club, Bob uses his charm and knowledge to announce relay swim meets; he announced the July 4th relays at the Vienna Aquatic Club for 20 years and recently was the announcer for the NVSL All-stars for the 39th year – he claims that he will stop at 40 years (it could be longer.....)!

Bob York lives in a lovely, quiet cul de sac, very close to Wolf Trap and the neighbors have called him “the Mayor of Lupine Den Court.” Bob has three grown children (Julianne, Becky, and Patrick) and four grandchildren. Julianne and Patrick work along with him at the York Swim Club. When they were growing up, Bob worked

two jobs in order to afford private schools for all three children. The children played at Meadowlark Park and living so close to Wolf Trap and Wolf Trap Barns meant decades of great concerts and family gatherings.

One of the many redeeming qualities that Bob has is that he cares about the community, as well as his swimmers, families and coaches. He connects the “benefits of sports, but especially the benefits of swimming. Success in the water is not the only goal. York strives to make their athletes shine in and out of the pool. As they progress through the programs, athletes learn better communication skills, how to balance their swimming lives with their academic and social lives. They also learn the importance of supporting their teammates.”



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