

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Southern Indiana

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USI alum, Dave Baumeyer, helps groom local Olympian

From his time as a college cheerleader and member of Sigma Tau Gamma at the University of Southern Indiana to his career as head swim coach at F.J. Reitz High School, Dave Baumeyer's journey to coaching the record-breaking Olympian Lilly King was anything but ordinary.

Lilly King graduated from F.J. Reitz High School in 2015, has continued her swimming career at Indiana University Bloomington and will represent the United States as member of the U.S. Swim Team during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she's a favorite to bring home a medal.

With little knowledge of swimming technique, the breaststroke in particular, Baumeyer, a 1980 USI graduate with a degree in business, was tapped as Reitz head swim coach in 2001. He was working for the *Evansville Courier & Press* at the time, a career he's held for 39 years, and where he now serves as transportation manager.

He wasn't tapped for his knowledge of swimming technique, in fact he'd never coached swimming in his life. He'd played a little baseball in high school and was on his fraternity's flag football and basketball teams. He'd dabbled in bowling and more recently had become a decent amateur triathlete. He had thought about coaching—football was where his aspirations lay—but his work schedule never allowed it.

When running partner Greg Gee called from Reitz one day to ask him to apply for the open swim coach position, his first answer was no. He just didn't feel he had the experience. But after a few weeks went by, he saw the position was still open, and Gee called a second time. This time he applied, and to his surprise, he got the job. The principal at the time told him it wasn't just about swimming. As important, was how you interact with the kids, and they thought he would be a good fit.

Not knowing what he was getting into, he read books, watched lots of videos and soaked up anything he could get his hands on about swimming. He had an assistant coach that he learned a lot from, and he worked with the girls' team coach at Reitz. "It's a learning process that has lasted 16 years," he says. "You never quit learning, I'm still learning to this day."

Being an effective communicator is Baumeyer's secret ingredient—his encouraging words create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of his swim team—he's always reminding them that if they aren't having fun, they're in the wrong place. That inclusive atmosphere he encouraged in the pool spread among team members, especially a 15-year-old Lilly King.

"She wasn't all about Lilly, said Baumeyer. "I would ask her to take some time from practice to help other kids, and she was always up for it. She would take time out of her own practice to help her team members with their stroke techniques." Her teammates weren't the only ones that the Olympian left a

lasting impression on. “She’s hardworking, focused and determined,” said Baumeyer. “Nothing would surprise me with her.”

Watching King grow as an individual and as a swimmer at Lloyd Pool in Evansville; winning the 100- and 200-meter breaststroke at the 2016 U.S. Olympic Trials in Omaha, Nebraska, in front of a crowd of 15,000; and now representing the United States in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Baumeyer is always cheering for his hometown hero—the selfless swimmer that he once yelled poolside words of encouragement to.

And, the entire Evansville community is rooting for their local Olympic athlete. “They’re excited because she isn’t just another Olympic swimmer. She was a kid that swam at their local pool, and now she’s an Olympian,” he said.

For now, Baumeyer is letting King focus on bringing home the gold, but he’s stayed in contact with her to remind her that her hometown is rooting for her, and to have fun and swim fast.

Lilly King will compete in the Women’s 100m breaststroke on Sunday, August 7, and the Women’s 200m breaststroke Wednesday, August 10. Meanwhile, Baumeyer is preparing for his 17th year of coaching at Reitz. A new year means a new team, and new talent he can groom and instill with his words of encouragement. Who knows, there may be a future Olympian in the bunch.

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Founded in 1965, the University of Southern Indiana enrolls more than 10,000 dual credit, undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students in more than 80 majors. A public higher education institution, located on a beautiful 1,400-acre campus in Evansville, Indiana, USI offers programs through the College of Liberal Arts, Romain College of Business, College of Nursing and Health Professions and the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. USI is a Carnegie Foundation Community Engaged University and offers continuing education and special programs to more than 15,000 participants annually through Outreach and Engagement. USI is online at www.usi.edu.

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