

## WCS 2022 - Jean K. Freeman Keynote

---

**Jean K. Freeman** swam for the Gophers and was the Women's Swimming Head Coach at the University of Minnesota for 31 years, from 1973-2004. Freeman's teams had 29 winning seasons, two national individual champions and seven top-20 team national finishes. Her teams won 76 Big Ten individual and relay titles, and Freeman was honored four times as Big Ten Coach of the Year. In 1999, she was the first woman to win the Outstanding Service Award, the highest honor bestowed by the College Swimming Coaches Association of America. To honor Jean's legacy as a pioneer in women's sport and her commitment to giving back, hard work, honesty, team, caring for the whole person, and excellence in every way, we have named this keynote in her honor. Jean passed away in 2010 after a battle with colon cancer. Watch a video tribute to Jean K. Freeman "More Than a Swim Coach" [here](#).



**Stephanie Wheeler**, head coach of women's wheelchair basketball at the University of Illinois, is a Paralympic gold medalist, World Championship gold medalist, and collegiate national champion. She was a member of the gold medal winning women's wheelchair basketball team at both the 2004 Athens and 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. She was also a member and co-captain of the gold medal winning 2010 world championship team that competed in Birmingham, England.



Originally from Norlina, North Carolina, Wheeler was recruited to play wheelchair basketball at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During her collegiate career, she was a part of 3 consecutive national championship teams (2002-2004), earning All-American honors each of those years and MVP honors in 2003. As head coach of the USA Women's Wheelchair Basketball team, Wheeler led the team to gold medals at the 2015 Parapan American Games and the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. As a result of her competitive and coaching success, Wheeler was elected to the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame in 2017 and the NWBA Hall of Fame in 2018.

Stephanie's passion is teaching and creating inclusive environments. She has conducted wheelchair basketball camps across the country and around the world; has consulted with the NCAA on inclusion of athletes with disabilities; and is actively involved with long term athlete and coach development for wheelchair basketball at all levels in the United States. She is also an ambassador coach for Athlete Ally and was a mentor athlete for US Paralympics and The Hartford. Stephanie is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois in Cultural Kinesiology, studying sport at the intersection of disability, gender, and sexuality.