

Helms Award (Athlete of the Year)

This is a medallion issued to the top diver in the U. S. It is also called the Citizens Savings Award. Cen-Cal nominates a diver annually.

The following is from a 1986 Spearfishing Nationals brochure:

The **Helms Athletic Foundation** has taken many turns through the years. Originally, created by **Paul Helms** of the old Helms Bakeries and **Bill Schroeder**, a sportswriter of earlier years, the foundation has grown from a personal collection of sports mementos and memorabilia into one of the world's finest sports museums and libraries. Helms Foundation awards, under the guidance of its originators, became the epitome of success and the most coveted within 23 sports, both amateur and professional.

After the passing of Paul Helms and the liquidation of his bakery, the Foundation was adopted by **United Savings** as the **United Savings Helms Hall of Fame**. Continuing under this sponsorship for several years, United Savings eventually was merged with **Citizens Savings**, adopting the name **Citizens Savings Athletic Foundation**. Another transition took place, and the Citizens Savings Athletic Foundation name gave way with a move to a new home under the auspices of **First Interstate Bank**. Then, in 1985 the **Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles** became the home of the awards which are still housed in the historic Brill House, donated by First Interstate Bank Athletic Foundation. But no matter what the name, the substance, ideas, and motivation remain the same.

"Tracing its beginnings to the 1932 Olympic Games held in Los Angeles, the Foundation has always been most concerned with the amateur athlete, and with youth and the value of sports in their lives." An awards program is presented at the high school and college level with the awards being presented by leading sports writers and broadcasters. Two awards of major significance selected by the Foundation are the **Southern California Athlete of the Month** and **Athlete of the Year**. "The Foundation also provides information on historical sports events and authenticates records and data for writers, students, or any individual interested in sports."

In 1952, the first freediving spearfishing award was given, and the **Spearfishing Athlete of the Year Award** was born. Since that date, each year the top freediving spearfisherman in the country has been awarded this most coveted of prizes.