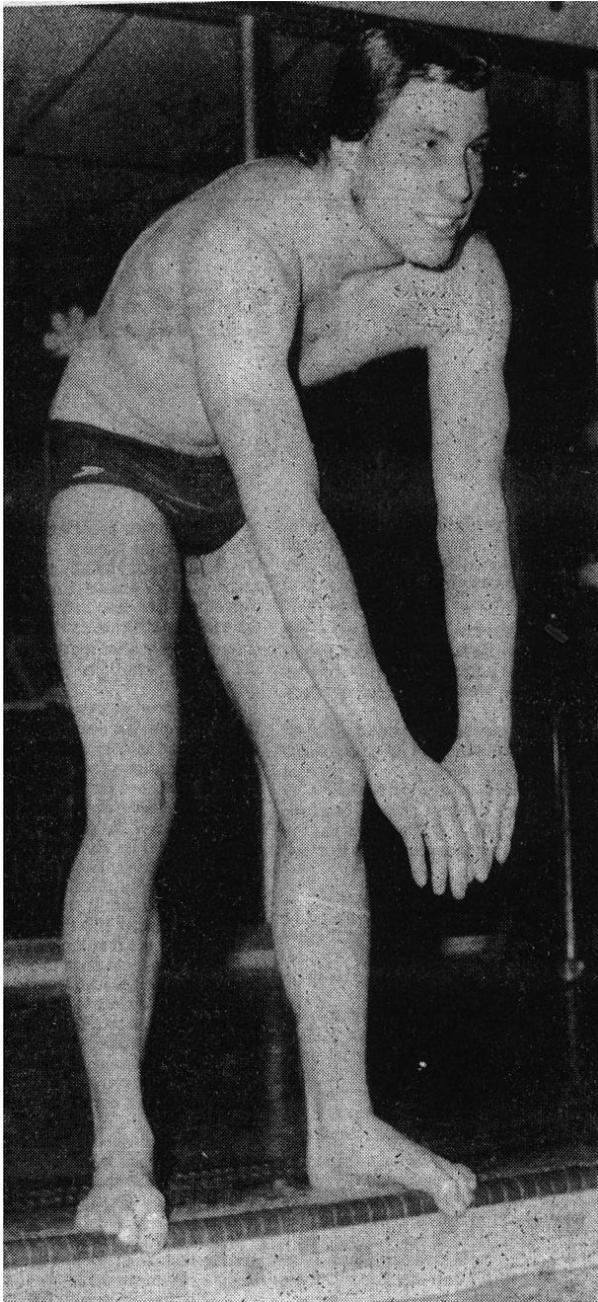


As we go through all the reasons that we came to CBA many times it is what CBA offered that helped us make the final decision to attend. Other times people come to CBA in spite of not having certain activities offered. And then there is a third group, the ones that come to CBA with the intention to help CBA start an activity. Kelly Hopkins and the Hopkins family are in the last group. When Kelly's brother Tiff attended CBA, he was a very accomplished swimmer. And although CBA did not offer a swim team, the Hopkins family was willing to send him there for the strong education he knew he was getting and the hope of a swim team in the future. Their first break came in 1971. The same ruling that allowed our basketball team to compete in the sectionals applied to all sports, including swimming. So in his senior year, Tiff was allowed to BE CBA's team in the sectional championships. So when Kelly started in 1973, the precedent had already been set. Tiff became Kelly's role model who he tried to outdo at every turn. But it takes more than just wanting a sport to happen to bring it to fruition. It takes a lot of legwork and Joan Hopkins was willing to do that for her son. Since there was already a group of talented boys who swam year round that already attended CBA, a case was made that was too good for Brother William and Gary Barnaba to pass up. John Leonard, highly regarded coach of the Syracuse Chargers agreed to be the teams' first coach and off they went.

The team swam a limited, three meet schedule in the winter of 1974 and was allowed to compete in the CNYCL tournament..... which they won!!!! A tremendous accomplishment for a first year team. Kelly also distinguished himself, by winning a sectional championship in his first year of competition. For the next two years, the program continued to grow and improve. By his junior year, the Brothers were considered one of the elite programs in the area. At the time, Watertown High had the dominant swim program in the CNYCL. In fact, going into the 1975 – 76 season, they had a 5 year league unbeaten streak that stood at 43 In one of the most competitive meets ever, the teams swam to a 86 – 86 tie! Coach Guy Edson said after the meet, do you know the probability of a meet with 172 points ending in a tie, it was just incredible. The Brothers lost the rematch later that season but the next year



CBA became the dominant team. Larger local schools refused to schedule non league meets with CBA and the team needed to travel to Ithaca and New Hartford just to fill their schedule (I guess some things never change!).... They did meet Watertown again and this time the result was different. The Brothers broke the six year 50 meet streak with a 107 – 65 thrashing of the Cyclones. In that meet, Kelly set two league records and elevated the team to a top 5 state ranking. Later that year came Kelly’s greatest accomplishment as a CBA athlete. After winning another sectional championship, Kelly advanced to the State Championships held at West Point. There he clocked a state record time of 59.04 in the 100 yard breast stroke, the FIRST NYS Swimmer to ever break 1:00 in the event, and became CBA’s first individual state champion in swimming. In that meet, he was also named New York State’s Most Outstanding Swimmer. While at CBA, Kelly was one of the best high school age swimmers in the USA. In fact, in his four year career he only lost one race in dual meet competition. State rules at the time only allowed him to compete in two events and a relay per meet. But in AAU meets Kelly could show his versatility. In the 1977 state championships, for example, he took two firsts, two seconds and one fifth place when competing against states best of the best.

He continued his swimming career, and success, first at Colgate and then at East Carolina University. During his junior year he was nationally ranked for most of the season. He qualified for the NCAA Championships and was poised to make a run at the 1980 Olympics. However, when it was decided that the United States would boycott those games in

Russia, Kelly hung up his goggles and went on to pursue his career in business, bringing to an end to one the most illustrious careers a swimmer from Central New York has ever achieved.

Kelly, you and your brothers Tiff and Nick, virtually started swimming at CBA. Your accomplishments brought great pride to the CBA Community and now we would like to show our gratitude by taking your rightful place in the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame.

