

won another national championship.

The lone disappointment came in 1984 when severe kidney problems forced Akey-Bowler out of the pool and into the hospital just after qualifying for the World Paralympic Games in Australia.

Now retired from competitive swimming, Akey-Bowler said "developing friendships" was the aspect of her athletic career that she'll cherish the most.

"You meet other amputees from all over the world," she says. "That was important. It gave me confidence and a challenge."

Today, as a full-time volunteer for the Kidney Foundation and as a dedicated recreational swimmer, Akey-Bowler feels good when she's asked to speak to someone who may be having difficulty dealing with a recent amputation.

"She just grabs George (the nickname Akey-Bowler gives to her artificial leg) and tells them it's not an ending, it's just the beginning," says Barbara Akey. "They often ask her if she'll come to the hospital to speak to kids or adults."

Akey-Bowler says she still finds freedom and fulfillment in the swimming pool during her regular weekly workouts.

"You're in the water and you just go," she says. "It's relaxing, there's not a lot of tension. You just go and do it."

Induction ceremonies at the Legion begin at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.