

# *Making a Statement: Annette Kellerman Advances the Worlds of Swimming, Diving and Entertainment*

John Lucas

In the history of western civilisation heroic women have played out their lives — making a statement in myth and history. While some women have emulated men in the much smaller, interesting but less important world of sport, very few have advanced new genres of athletic prowess as did Annette Kellerman. It will be argued that Kellerman played an innovative role in the development of aquatic water ballet, synchronised swimming, high-diving skills and that she deserves greater recognition for her many achievements. It will also be contended that Miss Kellerman was aware — sometimes imprecisely, sometimes with prescience — of her uniqueness as a world-famous athlete-entertainer, and as such realised her historic position in early twentieth-century Australian and American history. She was an important role model for many young women.

Kellerman was a specially gifted athlete with mental acuity and an awesome ambition to become the greatest ultra-marathon swimmer and the world's most famous water ballet performer. She fell short of the first but attained the latter dream. She had a meaningful half-century career in Australia and North America. In reflective moments she acknowledged her uniqueness as the highest-paid female athlete in the world and a brilliantly-acclaimed aquatic artist in the period from 1910 to 1940. In her infrequent writings there are hints of inevitable emulation by younger women, which did occur. She was not sufficiently educated or contemplative enough, given her wildly busy career, to reflect on 'what is woman'? Not even Virginia Woolf knew, but as she said: 'I do not believe that anybody can know until she has expressed herself in all the arts and professions open to human skill'.<sup>1</sup> Three generations earlier, Margaret Fuller (1810-50) espoused inward and outward freedom for woman as much as for man:

What woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule ... but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home.<sup>2</sup>

With similar logic and passion, several women have written in like vein: Carol Anne Letheren; Sara M Evans, Francene Sabin, Janice Castro, Ellen Boneparth, Emily Stoper and Genevieve Rail.<sup>3</sup> The liberated young golfer, Glenna Collet, said it as well as any, back in 1924. Playing honest, highly-competitive sport is, she said, 'keen exhilarating happiness ... so much velvet'.<sup>4</sup>

It will be argued in this article that this physically-gifted woman, Annette Kellerman, had an invisible but real kinship with those mentioned above as well as an army of later women. This article will attempt to link Kellerman and the persona that she assumed to her 'making a statement' in various arenas: firstly, as a pioneer female ultra-marathon swimmer; secondly, as the creator of a new sports genre, vaudeville swimming and 'artistic diving'; thirdly, as a motion picture star and physical culture exponent for the 'new' woman; and, finally, as a precursor to some modern women of the world.

### **Kellerman — the Marathon Swimmer**

Annette Kellerman (1886-1975) remembered her very early childhood as a horrible time of serious illness — a period of 'painful steel braces on my legs'.<sup>5</sup> She was born in Sydney, New South Wales, on 6 July and her very first memories were of half-body iron braces, her feet turned in and her knee joints in constant pain. 'I was very sensitive about my poor little deformed legs', she wrote, 'and I was permitted to wear long dresses to hide them'.<sup>6</sup> Her father, Australian-born Frederick William Kellerman, violinist and his French wife Alice Ellen, nee Charbonnet, pianist and music teacher, fought the child's poliomyelitis by putting Annette into the ocean water and taught her to swim.<sup>7</sup> Swimming was physical therapy for the child, but at Cavill's baths at the turn of the century she won her first race and in 1902, she showed diversity with New South Wales records for 100 yards (72 secs) and the mile (33:49).

Family work took the Kellermans to Melbourne where Annette became a pupil at Simpsons' School, Mentone, where her mother taught music. Annette Kellerman was active in school theatricals and also gave swimming and diving exhibitions at various Melbourne baths. She also

developed a mermaid act in an entertainment centre and cavorted with fish in a glass tank at the Exhibition Aquarium.<sup>8</sup> This all occurred by 1903.<sup>9</sup> By 1905, she had swum record times for five, ten and fifteen-mile distances on Melbourne's Yarra River. 'As far as I know these times still stand', wrote Annette's sister, Marcella K Wooster in 1975.<sup>10</sup> Miss Kellerman travelled to London 'for more people, more theatres, and more money'.<sup>11</sup> She was unknown in that country and, as she wrote, 'success in England did not come easily'.<sup>12</sup> To attract attention, she swam along the Thames River from Putney Bridge (through London) to Blackwall in 3 1/2 hours, with huge crowds watching. Her 25-mile swim caught the attention of the *Daily Mirror* editor and he invited the teenager to attempt the impossible, to become the first woman to swim the English Channel. 'Dad and I stood dumbfounded!' she remembered.<sup>13</sup> For six weeks she trained very hard, sometimes swimming a hundred miles a week. In late August 1905 Kellerman and three male champions walked into the ice-cold water at Dover, England. It was the thirtieth anniversary of Captain Matthew Webb's successful eleven-hour swim -the only person ever to perform the feat. On this occasion none of the men made it across the Channel, nor did the young woman succeed. She suffered terribly, remembering the promise of her sponsor that she would receive more money for every mile she advanced towards the French coast. Twice more she tried to swim the 22 miles. She failed, not for lack of endurance, she remembered, but because 'I just didn't have the physical strength'. In the summer and autumn of 1905, she made sporting headlines around the world.<sup>14</sup> Historian Wray Vamplew wrote that in 1906 Kellerman performed before thousands, when 'the 1906 Ladies' Amateur Swimming Association of NSW [Australia] held its championships behind locked doors, men not being allowed as spectators'.<sup>15</sup>

Kellerman went on to Paris and was well paid by *L'Auto* newspaper for swimming seven miles on the Seine River, with hundreds of thousands of curious onlookers. She slipped over to Austria and defeated Baroness Isa Cescu in a 22-mile 'Tulu to Vienna' swim, nearly killing herself in the ice-cold water filled with whirlpools and endless sharp rocks.<sup>16</sup> 'And she did all this', wrote an Australian journalist, 'when women's liberation hadn't even been heard of'.<sup>17</sup> Following a winter season at the London Hippodrome, where she invented a new aquatic genre, 'ornamental swimming',<sup>18</sup> she went to the United States in 1906, touring as 'vaudevillian aquatic star' where she earned a fortune, as much as \$1250 a week in

Chicago, Boston and New York.<sup>19</sup> On a Boston beach she wore one of her all black 'ornamental' bathing suits, which was handsome and brief, and was promptly arrested for 'indecent exposure'. It may have been her most publicised performance. Annette Kellerman, her one-piece, skirtless bathing suit and her detention made national headlines, including her immediate release by a tolerant judge. 'It was all a big mistake', she told a *Boston Globe* journalist, when re-visiting the city 46 years later.<sup>20</sup> Kellerman's last competitive swimming competition was a failure, which, somehow, ended again in public praise. On 30 July 1908 on Boston's Revere Beach, Kellerman plunged into the ocean determined to swim to and from the Boston Light. She gave up just yards short of the thirteen-mile finish, prompting a *Boston Post* reporter to proclaim: 'Annette's wonderful swim was far from being a disgrace'.<sup>21</sup> The next phase of her life, much longer than that of a competitive swimmer, then unfolded.

### **Kellerman Creates Vaudeville Swimming and Artistic Diving**

Annette Kellerman's 'ornamental water ballet' — so successful all over North America in the years before World War I — was the precursor to today's highly developed synchronised swimming. In other words, Kellerman's theatre-hippodrome performances were integrated water ballet and high-level athletics. Her 60 and 90-foot dives into a small pool and in front of thousands transfixed audiences and were both dangerous and memorable. Whatever it took and whatever paid well, Kellerman considered. She flirted with fish in a giant glass tank at the New York Hippodrome. For two years, fourteen shows a week, she performed as the 'Australian Mermaid', the 'Diving Venus', danced water ballet, cavorted under water for more than two minutes, delighted male and female audiences around the country. The famous journalist-fiction writer, Paul Gallico, remembered the old Colonial Theatre on New York's Broadway and 62nd Street and the perpetual 'Standing Room Only [SRO]' signs. We came to see her spectacular swan dives from the roof top, but also to see the most beautiful woman in the world, he remembered. Her gorgeous bathing suits 'made the question of how ladies were put together no longer a matter of speculation'.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, Miss Kellerman received a salary of \$5000 a week, making her possibly, the highest-paid 'working woman' in America.<sup>23</sup>

The great physical education scientist from Harvard University, the medical doctor Dudley A Sargent (1849-1924), wrote an astonishing essay

in the *New York Times* of 3 January 1903. He and his students took anthropometric measurements of 3000 young women, concluding that twenty-year old Annette Kellerman was the 'perfect woman'. The athlete-dancer, wrote Dr Sargent, is absolutely perfectly proportioned, free of excessive adipose tissue 'which gives grossness to the [human] figure'. Miss Kellerman 'is a good model for young women to pattern by, and they will instinctively admire her'.<sup>24</sup> Her exact measurements were given — a source of pride in Kellerman's 1918 book, *Physical Beauty — How to Keep It*. 'Dr Sargent stated that my measurements were nearer the correct proportions for women than any he had seen.' Thirteen statistics are listed.<sup>25</sup> Almost without exception Kellerman biographers quote Sarjent's 'perfect woman' essay.

In the spring of the same year, the Automobile Institute crowned this 'unusually pretty woman', Queen of the New York City Carnival and gave her a peach-coloured open Buick. She was driven down Fifth Avenue dressed as a mermaid. 'It was beastly cold', she remembered, 'but the Johnnies never knew as they cheered and whooped at the curbs'.<sup>26</sup> Kellerman was a very famous and wealthy woman when she married her manager, James R Sullivan in 1912, a union of 60 years until his death on 22 April 1972. From 1912 until the onset of the War, Kellerman and Sullivan toured major North American cities, sometimes joining forces with local entrepreneurs in constructing pools and water tanks 'larger than a tennis court'. Her live vaudeville-music hall presentations merged with and remained symbiotic with a new career — the motion pictures silent screen.

### **Motion Picture Star and Physical Culture Exponent for the 'New' Woman**

The perpetual-motion Kellerman kept up her live concerts across the continent and on the international circuit. She added to this regimen a profitable book writing business, frequent public speaking engagements, and a motion picture career which lasted twenty years. She used no 'stunt-person' in diving from 90-foot cliffs into the ocean for *Neptune's Daughter*, in Hollywood in 1915, which became a Hollywood film in 1916; and *A Daughter of the Gods* which 'staggered America' with its daring stunts.<sup>27</sup> *Diving Venus* and *Queen of the Mermaids* followed quickly which were films with little substantive plots or drama but rather, as film historian Richard Fotheringham wrote, they were 'diving and swimming

action adventures ... with the mise en scene motif of the female body as spectacle'.<sup>28</sup> She made films in Australia including *Come up Smiling*; *Swimology*, a movie short; *Isle of Love*; *The Honor System*; *Queen of the Sea*; *The Art of Diving*; *What Women Love*; *Venus of the South Seas*, and finally Kellerman's film autobiography, the 1952 Hollywood success, *Million Dollar Mermaid*, starring Esther Williams. Kellerman approved of the film and was on the movie set throughout.<sup>29</sup> Hollywood stars Victor Mature, Walter Pidgeon and David Brian played major supporting roles to Esther Williams in this MGM 111-minute film directed by Mervyn Le Roy and produced by Arthur Hornblow Jr.

### **Kellerman as Precursor to the Modern Woman of the World**

Annette Kellerman wrote three books including *How to Swim* (1918), which received a lengthy and positive review in the *New York Times Book Review of Sunday*, 9 June 1918 (Pt V, pp. 269, 274). Her best-seller, *Physical Beauty*, was reviewed in this same column. During one of her long visits to Australia, she wrote a children's story called *Fairytales of the South Seas*.<sup>30</sup>

*New York Times* journalist, Meyer Berger, who wrote a weekly column 'About New York', followed a stylishly dressed Annette Kellerman through Times Square and Broadway. Most of the old elegant theatres were gone. She commented: 'So much vulgarity, honky-tonk'. The two approached the Avenue of the Americas. She stopped and stared at a 'bone-white' parking lot, once the site of the Hippodrome. 'Charles Dillingham had my name in lights right there, two stories high'. She whispered to Berger the thrill of sharing a World War I program with the very great Russian classical ballet dancer, Anna Pavlovna Pavlova (1881-1931). I worshipped her talent, remembered Annette, who also recalled 'riding a white horse in a Hippodrome parade led by John Philip Sousa's band'. Berger concluded his essay with Kellerman's 'greatest hour' — a soldier benefit in the Metropolitan Opera House in 1917 — a Dan Frohman production:

She was on the same bill with Caruso, Scotti and Geraldine Farrar. They did 'Butterfly', Kreisler played. Toscanini, dark-haired then, led a ninety-piece band. 'I did Pavlova's "Swan"', Miss Kellerman said, '[and] got a great hand with it'.<sup>31</sup>

Miss Kellerman-Sullivan spent much of the 1920s in New Zealand and Australia, returning to New York City for major productions. She flew

from Cleveland to Long Island ‘in a Martin bomber ... in five hours’. The next day, 14 September 1925, she orchestrated a monster production at her beloved Hippodrome.<sup>32</sup> Health spas, exercise emporiums and special food shops, especially in California, all became Kellerman enterprises. On 21 January 1929, she began another world tour — her fifth — this time to Boston, New York, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>33</sup> Back to Australia for ten years, she supervised her many businesses, sat out the 1939-1945 war years, and returned to Hollywood for her biographical film, *Million Dollar Mermaid*. She returned to Melbourne as a 1956 Olympic Games spectator.<sup>34</sup> She retired to her ocean-side home in the small Gold Coast town of Holywell with her husband ‘Jimmie’, and remained strong in mind and body until the last year of her life. She walked into the ocean every day, swam a daily routine until her body failed and she died on 5 November 1975. She was cremated and her ashes were spread over ocean waters. She had already been inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1974 — just another monument to the Kellerman sporting immortality.

In the world of sport and entertainment, in the difficult-to-define arena of the twentieth-century’s ‘Women’s Movement’, Annette Kellerman was an original — a prototypical form. She was, simultaneously, immersed in her quest for ‘fame and fortune’, and for more than half-a-century aware of her uniqueness as a rare beautiful woman, athlete, entertainer, and pioneering female in health practices and physical activity life-styles. At the onset of the century, she swam rivers and oceans in Australia, England and the United States, capturing the interest and admiration of thousands of men and women - a significant feat in the first decade. The *Encyclopaedia of Australia* (1968) credits Kellerman as the first to introduce ‘formation swimming’ to the world, however one defines that phrase.<sup>35</sup> G P Walsh wrote of this restless woman:

Annette Kellerman did much to make women’s swimming popular and socially acceptable ... [she helped] emancipate women from the neck-to-knee bathing costume.<sup>36</sup>

Ishbel Johns, in her 1953 *Boston Sunday Globe* column, called Annette Kellerman a brave woman. Her handsome, original one-piece bathing suit became the ‘accepted female attire ... and symbol and fact of new freedom for women’.<sup>37</sup> Dudley Sargent, in his remarkable 1909 research,

where he called Miss Kellerman 'the world's most perfectly-formed woman', may have said something more important. 'She is a good model for young women to pattern by, and they will instinctively admire her'.<sup>38</sup>

A 1994 text, *Coming on Strong*, which praised twentieth-century women's rise, said of Kellerman: '[She] helped popularize *swimming* with her speed and her sleek, streamlined bathing suits — sleeveless, skirtless, form-fitting suits'.<sup>39</sup> One need not find a definitive cure for cancer to be categorised 'an important person'. Swimming for women is more than physical, wrote Kellerman in 1915. It can engender self-confidence, and in the art and science of swimming, a kind of equality, even superiority to that of men.<sup>40</sup> 'My chief pride and pleasure', she said, 'has been the knowledge that my work has stimulated an interest in swimming as a woman's sport'.<sup>41</sup> The International Hall of Fame tribute to Annette Kellerman called her 'Swimming's greatest saleswoman'. An Australian history text called her a person of significance 'in promoting health and beauty for women'.<sup>42</sup> At her passing in 1975, the *Melbourne Age* called Kellerman a pioneer 'who liberated women from shapeless neck-to-knee costumes'.<sup>43</sup> As a youngster, Kellerman did what must have been socially unacceptable, by challenging men's physicality. 'I challenge any man in the world at a distance greater than ten miles'. The year was 1905!<sup>44</sup> It seems to this investigator and to Wray Vamplew that Kellerman was no ordinary person, but rather a 'daredevil' and a progressive young woman who made a lasting contribution.<sup>45</sup> A *New York Times* obituary applauded Kellerman's contribution to women, to the discipline of physical education, and to her 'rigid exercise and physical fitness routine' to the very end of her event-filled life.<sup>46</sup> Kellerman lectured New York City school teachers in 1916, reminding them that 'Physical culture and outdoor exercises must be daily routines, and must be for all children'.<sup>47</sup> She told whoever would read her book: 'I am tired of this ancient stupid lie that women must be forever fat and lack physical condition'.<sup>48</sup>

This pioneer sporting woman — athlete and entrepreneur — was no less a grand salesperson for swimming sport-for-all, especially girls and women. Long-distance swimming is a 'character-builder' she told an interviewer. 'Anything else seems easy by comparison'.<sup>49</sup> This charismatic woman, Annette Kellerman, 'is an inspiration to women throughout the world', wrote Theodora Sohst in 1919.<sup>50</sup>

Kellerman claimed that childhood ballet lessons gave her essential training for her poise and posture on the stage and underwater. She told

reporter Johns that in 1917:

... she danced 'The Dying Swan' at a benefit at the Metropolitan to the accompaniment of a 90 piece orchestra with Toscanini conducting. 'Alone in the blue spot on that stage', she said, her voice trails off, her eyes lost for a moment in the dream.<sup>51</sup>

Annette Kellerman Sullivan was, in the world of competitive swimming and sports entertainment, a significant person. In her day, on three continents, she was a recognised public entertainer. This research project represents an attempt to place her correctly in twentieth century sporting history as well as a player in the early women's sports movement. Hollywood's Kellerman biography, *The Million-Dollar Mermaid*, with its predictable 'soap-opera' approach, fails to do her justice." On the other hand, how many female athletes, prior to 1952, have produced a nearly two hour motion-picture film biography? It is possible that Kellerman was unique in this visual realm. In these early days, she was an independent working woman (and therefore a brave woman). Late in life, she returned to New York City and walked Broadway, Times Square and Fifth Avenue, with theatre-expert, Meyer Berger. So much has changed she commented:

She shut her wide eyes as if in pain. 'It's all so raucous now', she sighed ... She went back to the Astor [Hotel] ... still a handsome figure, and you could believe that she still does pirouettes and high kicks. But this was not her Broadway. She tightened the green coat about her and vanished in the Astor's glistening chrome doors.<sup>53</sup>

## NOTES:

- 1 See Virginia Woolf (1883-1941) in 'Words of Note', *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 Mar. 1996, p. 16.
- 2 Margaret Fuller, 'Women in the Nineteenth Century' (1845), as located in Mary Kelley, ed., *The Portable Margaret Fuller*, Penguin, New York, 1994, p. 244.
- 3 See Letheren, 'Sport for Women and Women for Sport', *Sport 2*, May-June 1994, British Sports Council, pp. 4-5; Sara M Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America*. Free Press, New York, 1989; Francene Sabin, *Women Who Win*, Dell, New York, 1979; Janice Castro, 'Get Set: Here We Come!', *Time*, 136, Fall 1990, pp. 50-2; Boneparth and Stoper, *Women, Power and Policy: Toward the Year 2000*, Pergamon, New York, 1988; Rail in the *Proceedings* of the International Olympic Academy, 1990. Two important oral presentations by Monique Berlioux on women as sports administrators (Dublin 1980 and Lisbon 1990) are in this researcher's personal library.
- 4 See Collet in the *Literary Digest*, 82, 13 Sept. 1924, p. 74.
- 5 Annette Kellermann, *Physical Beauty: How to Keep It*, George H Doran, New York,

- 1918, p. 83. This is a rare spelling of her surname which usually appeared as Kellerman.
- 6 A Kellerman, 'How I Swam into Fame and Fortune', *American Magazine*, 83, Mar. 1917, p. 33.
  - 7 See *Collins Australian Encyclopedia*, 1984, p. 354; *Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB)*, vol. 9, 1983; *The Modern Encyclopaedia of Australia and New Zealand*, 1964, p. 544; W Vamplew et al, eds, *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport [OCAS]*, OUP, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 196-7.
  - 8 *ADB*, vol. 9.
  - 9 See Margaret Williams, *Australian on the Popular Stage 1829-1929*, OUP, Melbourne, 1983, p. 208.
  - 10 M K Wooster to Buck Dawson, June 1977, Executive Director of the International Hall of Fame, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
  - 11 See 'Annette Kellerman — Honor Contributor' to the International Hall of Fame.
  - 12 Kellerman, quoted in *Bookman* [London], 47, May 1918, p. 314.
  - 13 Kellerman, 'How I Swam', p. 33.
  - 14 'Annette did wonderfully well', wrote a writer for the *Bulletin* [Melbourne], 31 Aug. 1905, p. 26. See also *New York Herald*, 25 Aug. 1905, p. 11; *New York Tribune*, 25 Aug. 1905, p. 9. 'Miss Kellerman's performances are a continuous list of victories'.
  - 15 *OCAS*, p. 344.
  - 16 Kellerman, 'How I Swam' p. 80, and a letter from Julie Brennan to Buck Dawson, 11 Apr. 1975. Miss Brennan was a life-long friend of the Kellerman family.
  - 17 Greg Hartung, 'The Kellerman Legend — Record after Record', *Australian*, 7 Nov. 1975. See also 'Annette Marie Sarah Henderson', in *The A to Z of Who is Who in Australia's History*, 1987, p. 288.
  - 18 This phrase is found in Robert Markell and Nancy Brooks, *For the Record: Women in Sport*, World Almanac, New York, 1985, p. 114.
  - 19 See *ADB*.
  - 20 See Ishbel Johns, 'Boston Arrest a Mistake Says Annette', *Boston Sunday Globe*, 11 Oct. 1953.
  - 21 Harry S Center, 'Annette Kellerman's Wonderful Swim', *Boston Post*, 31 July 1908.
  - 22 See Gallico's, *The Golden People*, Doubleday, New Jersey, 1965, p. 56. For more on Kellerman's unique melding of athletic skill and showmanship see Richard Fotheringham, *Sport in Australian Drama*, CUP, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 180-8; 'The Stage in Brooklyn', *Herald*, 8 Aug. 1909, 'Brooklyn Section', p. 5; 'Annette Kellerman at the Winter Garden', *Harper's Weekly*, 56, 27 Jan. 1912, p. 19; 'Annette Kellerman's Dancing Pantomime', *Cosmopolitan*, 49, June 1910, p. 86; 'Swimming for Women', *Country Life*, 36, Aug. 1919, p. 58; 'Of Interest to Playgoers', *Harper's Weekly*, 56, 27 Jan. 1912, p. 19; 'She earned up to \$4000 a week' wrote the obituary columnist in the *Age*, 7 Nov. 1975.
  - 23 See 'MEANZ' for this salary figure.
  - 24 Dudley Allen Sargent, 'Modern Dances as Athletic Exercises', *New York Times*, 3 Jan. 1909.
  - 25 See *her Physical Beauty*, pp. 48-9.
  - 26 Her quote is located in Meyer Berger, 'Annette Kellerman Sighs at the Changes on Broadway'. *New York Times*, 9 Oct. 1953; see also *New York Times*, 23 and 25 April 1909.
  - 27 Fotheringham, *Sport in Australian Drama*, p. 181.
  - 28 Fotheringham, *Sport in Australian Drama*, p. 181.
  - 29 See Leslie Halliwell, *The Filmgoer's Companion*, p. 424; Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia*, 1970, p. 645; John Tulloch, *Legends on the Screen: The Australian Narrative Cinema 1919-1929*, 1981, pp. 63. 85; *New York Times*, 19 Apr. 1916,

- 27 Jan. 1917; Paul Rotha, *The Film Till Now*, 1949, p. 209; Annette Blonski, ed., *Don't Shoot Darling! Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia*, 1987, p. 30; Eric Reade, *Australian Silent Films*, 1970, pp. 28, 94, 145; See also 'A Sea-Goddess Swims Back into Our Ken', *New York Times*, 23 Apr. 1936, in which the author B R Crisler wrote that Annette Kellerman's swim choreography is 'as original as that other Australian export, the kangaroo ... She thinks nothing of staying under water two and one-half minutes' [at age 50]. The Esther Williams aka Annette Kellerman film appears regularly on television 're-runs' and may be purchased as a cassette tape.
- 30 Hartung, 'The Kellerman Legend'.
- 31 See note 26.
- 32 *New York Times*, 14 and 15 Sept. 1925.
- 33 *New York Times*, 11 Jan. 1929.
- 34 Kellerman's sister, Marcella Wooster, tried unsuccessfully to chronicle Annette's life from 1935 to 1952. 'With no theatre to occupy her time, she and Jimmy embraced their California health store businesses. She never missed a day swimming the ocean'. See Wooster to Dawson, June 1977.
- 35 See p. 290 on 'formation swimming'. See also John Shaw, ed., *The Concise Encyclopedia of Australia*, 1984, p. 354, and *The Modern Encyclopaedia of Australia and New Zealand*, 1964, p. 544.
- 36 *ADB*, vol. 9, p. 549.
- 37 See note 20.
- 38 For Dr Sargent's comment, see note 24.
- 39 Susan K Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sport*, 1994, p. 45.
- 40 'For women, swimming is a time being a fish', wrote Kellerman in her essay, 'The Girl Who Wants to Swim', *Ladies Home Journal*, 32, July 1915, p. 9.
- 41 See Kellerman's book, *Physical Beauty*, pp. 84-5.
- 42 See note 17, *The A to Z ... in Australia's History*.
- 43 See note 22.
- 44 *Tribune*, 25 Aug, 1905.
- 45 *OCAS*, pp. 344-5.
- 46 *New York Times*, 6 Nov. 1975.
- 47 'Miss Kellerman Talks to Teachers', *New York Times*, 19 Nov. 1916.
- 48 See her *Physical Beauty*, pp. 24, 26.
- 49 See the essay by Ishbel Johns.
- 50 See *Country Life*, 31, Aug. 1919.
- 51 See note 20.
- 52 See note 28. The MGM/UA video of *Million Dollar Mermaid* has a title number 'VHS-M300893 Hi-F'.
- 53 See Berger's elegant essay in the *New York Times*, 9 Oct. 1953.