

Advance Publicity for “Marilyn Bell and Marathon Swims Across Lake Ontario”

In 1954 the Toronto Telegram and the CNE sponsored Florence Chadwick, a famous California marathon swimmer, to come to Toronto and attempt to be the first person to swim across Lake Ontario. She failed, but Marilyn Bell, an unknown Toronto teenager, entered the water at the same time as Chadwick and against all odds managed to complete the feat. Toronto was enthralled with the story of this plucky teen, but she wasn't the last to conquer the cold waters of the lake. Kim Lumsdon, Cindy Nicholas and Vicki Keith are among the more than 60 others who have completed the swim. We'll talk about the whole history of CNE marathon swims as well.

Richard Jordan is a former President of the Etobicoke Historical Society and a former **Toronto Star** local history columnist. His feature articles on historical subjects have also appeared in the **Saturday Star** and the **Sunday Star**.

The photo below shows Marilyn Bell entering the water and one of the headlines that was generated by her amazing feat of being the first person to swim across Lake Ontario. Marilyn Bell went on to conquer the English Channel among other challenges before retiring.

