



## MEDIA ADVISORY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Chicago Dragon Boat Club Sends Members to Thailand for World Championship Race**

This year's Chicago International Dragon Boat Festival in Busse Woods will have even more significance for John McDermott, the founder and coach of the Greater Chicago Dragon Boat Club, because it will be one of the last local races he takes part in before heading to Thailand for the world championship race.

Aug. 20-25, 2019, will be the 14<sup>th</sup> International Dragon Boat Federation's World Dragon Boat Racing Championships in Pattaya-Rayong, Thailand. Five thousand paddlers representing 30 different countries from six continents will converge on the small village. Two other members of the GCDBC will be joining McDermott.

"I'm so proud that our club, which is only three years old, will have three members competing with the strongest paddlers in the United States as part of Team USA," says McDermott.

Randy Tom, who grew up in Chinatown and Gemma Diego Urquiola De Bastyr, who lives in Indianapolis, but drives to Chicago every week to train with the GCDBC, have spent the last year training for this opportunity.

"The journey for the athlete takes a tremendous amount of work in terms of physical training and involves a huge time commitment—including being out of the country for two weeks," explains McDermott, who is a member of Team USA for a second time.

In 1985, the veteran was asked to represent the United States in Hong Kong. It was only the third year the U.S. had fielded a team. McDermott said he learned quickly they were out of their depth.

"We didn't understand the dynamics of the sport. We were still trying to figure out the right technique," explains the GCDBC coach who is considered one of the nation's best sternsmen. "The stroke we currently use, the team and the sport have evolved so much in the U.S. since then."

McDermott says he is so excited for Team U.S.A. and believes the team has a good chance of being one of the top teams in the world. On Saturday, he will get a chance to show off his club members at the daylong annual dragon boat race at the Busse Lake Boating Center, 3000 Busse Forest Nature Preserve, Rolling Meadows, Illinois.

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