Better with Age

In August 2018, Aaron Kelson, Jeff Brown, and Robert Licari traveled to Mankato to participate in the swimming competition for the Minnesota Senior Games. While at this meet, they were discovered by the media team with sureCan Productions. They were interviewed, photographed, and filmed extensively. The team explained that they had been contracted by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota to produce media content about inspiring “senior” athletes. sureCan Productions decided that their story was one they wanted to include in their work. In the first week of October, the team spent three days with Aaron, Jeff and Robert. Again, they were interviewed, photographed, and filmed extensively. This time they were able to understand the basic story of the three men.

Aaron and Robert swam together for Biwabik High School in the 1970’s. Jeff swam for Eveleth at the same time. Swimming was a big part of their lives then. Little did they know the important role swimming would play in the rest of their lives.

They all moved away from northern Minnesota around 1980. After 15-20 years of college and establishing their careers, they all made their way back home, and all within a few years of each other. None of them knew the others had come back. In 2004, Aaron met Jeff again while swimming at the YMCA in Mt. Iron. They renewed their friendship and began competing again as members of the Nort’landers Masters Swimming team. Later, Licari, attending his son’s swim meet at Eveleth-Gilbert, recognized a swim stroke and commented to the woman sitting next to him. “When I was in high school, I was on the team with someone who swam just like that.” “Who was that?” the woman responded. “Aaron Kelson,” Licari replied. Surprised, the woman said, “Well, that’s Caleb Kelson, Aaron’s son. And Aaron is sitting right over there!”

Kelson has taught economics and business at Mesabi Range College since 2002. He is currently the assistant swim coach at Eveleth-Gilbert High School.

Better with Age: MN Senior Games stories will be aired through the month of December. See local listings for air times.
as a 10 or 11 year old at the same meet. Robert said to a person sitting next to him, “When I was in high school I was on the team with someone who swam just like that swimmer.” The person next to him said, “What was his name?” Rob replied, “Aaron Kelson.” The woman said, “Well, that is Caleb Kelson, Aaron’s son. Aaron is sitting right over there!” The men became close friends again right away.

Swimming is the common thread that links these men together. Aaron Kelson has taught economics and business courses at Mesabi Range College since 2002. He is also the assistant swim coach at Eveleth-Gilbert High School. Aaron encourages students to strive for the next higher level in their life.

See Better with Age: MN Senior Games Stories in your local listings throughout the month of December for six unmissable short stories of real senior athletes in Minnesota living their best lives.