

Professor Carol Irwin Interviewed July 26th on NBC's Rock Center

A Memphis program designed to bridge the gap between minorities and swimming will appear on NBC's "Rock Center" with Brian Williams on Thursday, July 26, at 9 p.m. Memphis time.

University of Memphis professor and Make a Splash Mid-South board member Carol Irwin, PhD, is profiled in this report. Dr. Irwin, the principal investigator, along with team members Dr. Richard Irwin, Dr. Tim Ryan, Dr. Sally Ross, Dr. Nathan Martin, and Dr. Joris Drayer, conducted groundbreaking research which identified that almost 69 percent of African-American children do not know how to swim or can only swim in the shallow end of the pool. They also identified barriers to swim lesson participation.

Make a Splash Mid-South, a program started after the fatal drowning of two teens in Memphis pools in 2008, utilized Irwin's research in developing a comprehensive free and low-cost swim lesson program in Memphis. Make a Splash Mid-South, started by Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, is a community coalition of organizations committed to the health and safety of children. Members include the City of Memphis Parks and Neighborhoods, YMCA of Memphis and the Mid-South, the University of Memphis, among others.

The "Rock Center" story will also include video from the Memphis Splash Diversity Swim Team practice at Hickory Hill Aquatic Center. The Memphis Splash team is the developmental swim team started by Make a Splash Mid-South to provide new swimmers an opportunity to further develop their skills.

Irwin is an assistant professor in the Department of Health and Sport Sciences in the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences. Her research has been funded by USA Swimming Foundation and the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis.