

University of Haifa

The Senate of the University of Haifa, by virtue of the authority vested in it by the constitution of the University and in accordance with the recommendations of the President and the Executive Committee

hereby confers upon

Keren Leibovitch

the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa

In recognition of her unique contribution to Paralympic sports and on her being one of the pillars of athletics for the disabled in Israel; on the great honor that she bestowed upon the State of Israel through her inspirational sporting achievements, as yet unequalled by any other athlete; on her considerable efforts to raise public awareness of disabled sports and on her support of athletes with disabilities; for her astonishing ability to meet the challenges of disability and life-changing situations; for her unique and ground-breaking success in achieving lofty goals; and for her moving life story.

Conferred on 12 Sivan 5777/June 6, 2017
Haifa, Israel



Mooly Eden

Chairman of the Executive Committee



Prof. Ron Robin

President



Prof. Gustavo Mesch

Rector



KEREN LEIBOVITCH

Keren Leibovitch was born in 1973 in Hod Hasharon. While participating in an officers' training course during her military service, Keren suffered a severe injury to her spine that left her partially paralyzed in both legs.

Keren decided not to succumb to her disability. In spite of the severity of the injury, she was determined to continue playing sports, as she had from a young age, and concentrated on swimming -- a sport for which she always had a particular affinity.

Keren's achievements throughout her career are numerous. She competed in three Paralympic Games, the European Championships, and the World Championships in 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle and backstroke swimming events.

After years of intense training, Keren reached the pinnacle of her success in Sydney when she competed in the 2000 Paralympic Games, winning three gold medals and breaking several world records.

Four years later, at the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens, Keren won four medals: one gold, two silver, and one bronze. That year she was given the honor of lighting a torch at the State of Israel's 56th Independence Day celebrations.

In 2012, after an injury prevented her from competing in the Paralympic Games in London, Keren set a goal for herself that sounded inconceivable – to stand on her own two legs and walk. She began strenuous exercises daily to strengthen her legs and abdominal muscles, and after three years she indeed did the unbelievable – she stood on her feet and began walking with crutches. Keren's success serves as a source of inspiration to people in Israel and around the world.

In addition to her dedication to swimming and training, Keren Leibovitch is very active in raising public awareness of Paralympic sports and supporting athletes with disabilities.

Keren is a single mother to two sets of twins: Eitan, Daniel, Uri and Noam.