

Empire Runners Club Hall of Fame 2012

Jerry Lyman

b. 3/31/1949

Jerry's first experience with endurance running was as a lab rat for grad students in the P.E. Department at the University of Illinois at age 9, where they stuck him on a treadmill with a breathing harness on his head. Since then he has loved to run.

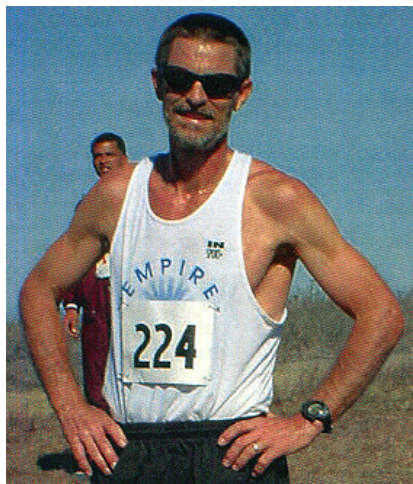
In high school, Jerry's athletic obsession was basketball, where he was a starter on the varsity team as a junior and senior. While not a prolific scorer, he could hustle up and down the court like no other. In his junior year in 1966 the team made it all the way to the Sweet Sixteen of the Illinois State Basketball Tournament – the apex of his basketball career.

Jerry also ran cross country and track in high school. He was the 5th man on the cross country team that easily won conference and regional titles. In track, Jerry competed in the 440 yard dash and broad jump.

Jerry attended college in the Boston area from 1967 to 1971, a period of great political turmoil. Athletics was not a priority for him during this time.

After college, Jerry switched coasts and joined his brother in Palo Alto. The 70s running boom was taking off and a new hobby was born. After a few weeks of training and a couple trial races he jumped into his first marathon – the Belmont. He held up for 18 miles and then hit the wall. Within minutes he was passed by the infamous 64 year-old Walt Stack relating an off-color joke to a young woman running beside him. He never got to hear the punch line and wouldn't run another marathon for 27 years.

Jerry remained mostly a recreational runner for the next couple decades before joining the Y in 1996. There he met Ralph Harms, who led the group exercise class that included a short run at the end. Ralph encouraged Jerry to run some races, which eventually lead him to the Empire Runners Club. He joined the club in 1997 at the age of 47.



Ralph's encouragement and the Empire Runners changed his life. By the time he turned 50 Jerry was in the best shape of his life. In the decade following, he broke the 80% age-graded Hall of Fame threshold in over 40 races, including at the age of 50 a 35:58 10K (85.35%) and a 28:41 8K (84.5%), both in PA series races, and a 17.53 5K on the track. He also won 5 Dipsea black shirts and ran a 2:57 CIM Marathon to qualify for Boston, which he ran in 2000.

In addition to Jerry's success as a runner, his participation in club affairs has been extensive. He has served at one time or another as club president, vice president, membership director, newsletter editor, club race coordinator, Kenwood and Empire Open race director, website admin, insurance and permit admin, cross country captain and member of numerous committees.

