

**Empire Runners Club
2010 HALL OF FAME**

Jim Ray

b. 8/31/1925

James Howard Ray was born in 1925 in Connecticut, but his father and mother, both native Vermonters only lived there for a few months before returning to Burlington, where Jim grew up close to his grandparents.

Jim's running career began in high school where in the fall of 1942, as a junior, he captained the cross country team. As a senior, Jim ran the 100 and 220 yard sprints on the track team and placed in the state meet.

Jim left high school in early January of 1943 to attend Middlebury College in order to be eligible to enlist in the Navy V12 program that would send him to a university. By February, he was accepted in the Naval Reserve, but the Navy would not accept him in the V12 program because he didn't have a high school diploma. Through a special meeting of the school board, he was granted a high school degree to satisfy eligibility. Jim attended MIT and ran the mile and two mile with the track team, as well as cross-country, earning letters in both sports. Jim graduated with a degree in engineering in 28 months before being assigned to Okinawa in the closing days of the Second World War.

Jim married as soon as he returned to the U.S., and he and his first wife, Nita, had seven children between 1947 and 1962. During that time, given work and family, he didn't have much time for running. But after his move to California, and his subsequent divorce and remarriage to Muriel, he began to run again with a friend to help his friend qualify for the Boston Marathon. The friend never qualified, but Jim went on to run many marathons, including going to Moscow with World Runners in 1986. His best time in the marathon was 3:13.

Jim and Muriel moved to Sonoma County in April of 1986. He joined the Empire Runners a year later. A friend introduced him to the Avenue of



**First Marathon
age 55
Golden Gate, 1980**

the Giants Marathon, and when Jim started working with a personal trainer, she suggested the Humboldt Marathon because it would be easier to train during the summer for a race in the fall. As of this writing, Jim holds the age group records for 70 to 75, 75 to 80, and 80 to 85 in the Humboldt Marathon.

Jim has run races all over Sonoma County. His strength as been running in his maturity, having 9 first place finishes for the Sonoma County Human Race in his age group.

In 2007, at age 81, Jim ran the Human Race 10K in 54:36, an age-graded rating of 82.7%.

Jim won his age group each time he ran the Rock 'n Roll Marathon in San Diego and the Napa Marathon. He feels he was better as an older runner than when he was young and is very grateful for his collection of awards and ribbon from his many races. He also appreciates the experience of fellowship and camaraderie that has been part of being in the running club.