

Empire Runners Club Hall of Fame 2011

Kathy Van Riper

b. 8/20/1969 d. 2/5/2010

Qualifying Standard met:

- Kenwood Footrace 10K, 1985 (age 15), 31:54. Age grading: 81.69%
- Sonoma High School track record, 2-Mile, 1987 (age 17), 11:06. Age grading: 82.05%

Kathy was one of the first of our local female running super stars. Her name comes to mind with the likes of Julia Stamps, Sara Bei, Trina Cox, Jenny Aldridge, and Amber Trotter. She accomplished her first Hall of Fame qualifying time came in 1985 at the age of 15 on the very difficult Kenwood Footrace 10K course. Two years later she set the top 2-mile track mark at Sonoma High School, a record which at this date still stands.

In 1991, Kathy earned a bachelor's degree in education at Northern Arizona State University, which she attended on a track scholarship. After graduating, she came back to Sonoma and taught math, science, and physical education at St. Francis Solano School.

She met her husband, Marc, when she took an EMT training class taught by Marc in Santa Rosa in 1993. They married a year later. Their daughter, Jillian, was born in 1997. Their son, Ian, was born in 1999.

Kathy is most remembered for her heroic battle of 10 years against breast cancer and as an inspiring crusader for a cure. She and Marc established Kathy's Camp for Kids, a non-profit organization providing community and support for children of parents with cancer.

Even while she was ill, running continued to play a special role in Kathy's life--as personal therapy and celebration of a healthy life and as precious recreation for herself and for her family. In 2009, the Empire Runners Club created the Kathy Van Riper Inspiration Award to be "presented annually to an Empire Runners Club member whose personal courage, generosity of spirit, and/or dedication to the sport of running extraordinarily inspires us as runners and fellow human beings." Appropriately, Kathy was the award's first recipient.





Mike McGuire

b. 1/15/1945

First joined ERC: circa 1979

Qualifying standard met:

- Resolution Run 10K, January 1983--33:52 Age: 37. Age grading: 82.05%

Mike swam and wrestled in high school and would have avoided running altogether, but his swimming coach was also the cross country coach. So, for one year, he ran cross country. In graduate school in 1971, he was inspired by a member of the P.E. Department who had just returned from a 5 mile run and was coherent enough to talk about it. The idea that one could run for fun began to sink in. In 1972, he ran his first Ilsanjo Classic 10-Miler after reading about it in the morning newspaper. From then on, he was hooked.



Throughout the mid '70's to mid '80's, Mike was willing to race "anytime someone scratched a line against the road." He ran local and regional races nearly every weekend, including a dozen marathons—Boston, San Francisco, Humboldt Redwoods, Avenue of the Giants, and Napa. His PR marathon was 2:41:16 in 1983. He ran several Bid Classic Half-Marathons, clocking a PR 1:15:46 in 1981.

Mike also toyed with ultras and triathlons. He teamed with Joe Phaby, Art Webb, and Jim Bower to form a powerhouse 24-Hour Relay team at Sonoma State and ran three 24-Hour Track Runs at SRJC, his best distance being 102 miles. He won his age group division in the 2nd Annual Vineman Triathlon full Ironman distance.

Even more outstanding than his running prowess has been his efforts as a volunteer in support of the running of others. Mike was instrumental in the inauguration of several classic local races, including the Harvest Fair Run, the Super Mile, Run for the Roses, the Human Race, A Quick Run to the Market, the Snoopy Run, and several winery runs. Mike has hosted the club event named for

him, McGuire's Breakfast Run, all but once since 1981.

Mike confesses to occasional lapses in dues but has considered himself a loyal Empire Runners Club member since he joined in 1979. During that time he has held various club positions, including newsletter editor and club president, and has assisted with countless club races. Mike was the first cross country coach at Herbert Slater Junior High and has retired as the Principal of Hidden Valley Middle School. His current athletic focus is cycling. He is aiming to qualify for the 2011 Paris-Brest-Paris 1200K.



Ralph Harms

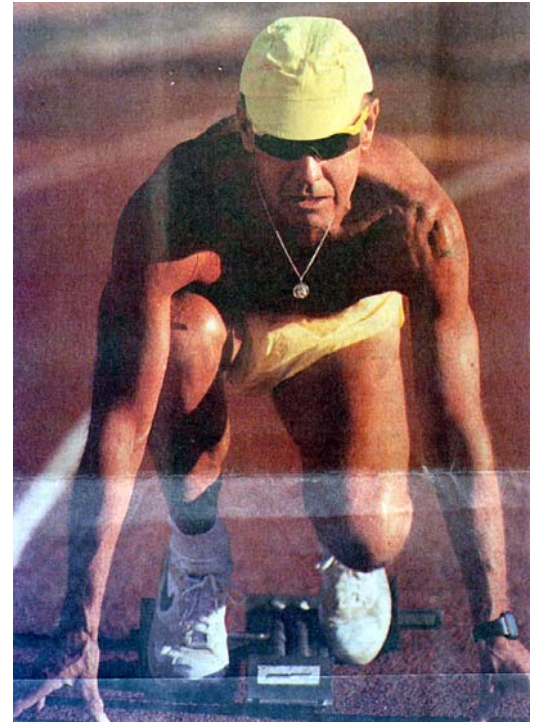
b. 10/1/1935

Qualify Standard met: numerous (at least 20), including

- Palm Springs Senior Olympics, 1995 (age 60) 1500m, 5:06. Age Grading: 85.81%

Ralph was born and raised in San Francisco, married his high school sweetheart, Kathleen, with whom he raised 4 children, and moved to Santa Rosa in 1980. Ralph was a baker by trade, operating his own bakery in San Francisco, and later in Santa Rosa he co-owned a sporting goods store catering to runners and tennis players.

In junior and senior high school Ralph ran the 100 yard dash but never raced a longer distance until he was nearly 40 when he entered the 1974 Bay to Breakers. He must have liked that experience because he continued to race competitively on road, track, and cross country for 34 consecutive years.



Not one for moderation, three years after his first Bay to Breakers, Ralph strung together 13 marathon races in 12 months and then enlisted in the Army Special Forces for a stint as a Green Beret. At age 42 he was at the time the oldest volunteer ever to pass the fitness qualifications and be accepted into this elite military group. Needless to say, Ralph was and is beyond tough. Always a fierce competitor, he completed 29 life-time marathons. In 1985 he won his age group division in 3 Sonoma County races—in one weekend!

Ralph has competed in races locally and all over the country, including several national senior and veteran track meets. In 1995, he qualified as a **Masters News** All-American in 5 events—the 800m, 1500m, mile, 3000m, and 5000m, and won gold medals in the 800m (2:33) and 1500m (5:23) at the Huntsman World Veteran Games in St. George, Utah. Ralph also helped set 2 world 4 x 1600m relay records—in the 60 & older division in 1996 and in the 70+ division in 2008, both times running with Tamalpans at the College of Marin.

For twenty years (1980 to 2000) Ralph led exercise classes at the Sonoma County YMCA, where he continues to work out and lift weights religiously. His commitment to the health and welfare of young people has been demonstrated by his years as assistant coach of track and cross country at Santa Rosa Junior High (1981) and High School (1982-1995) and currently as coach and trainer at Double Punches Boxing Club. (Ralph is a former college, Golden Gloves, and U.S. Army boxer.) Ralph also serves on the Sonoma County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force.

At 75 Ralph, still runs up in Annadel and has not lost his invincible demeanor. At Double Punches he humbles his young protégés in push-up contests. As you can imagine, he commands respect. The kids know not to mess with this guy—and that he loves them.