

# Larry Meredith

B. 6/27/1957



Larry was born and raised in the small town of Selma, near Muncie, Indiana. He got his start in running as a middle school sprinter but when success wasn't imminent he tried the mile. By the eighth grade he finished 5th in the county meet which led him to being a 4-year member of the cross country and track teams at Wapahani High School. Larry finished junior and senior years as the Delaware County mile champion with a PR of 4:38 and his senior year cross country team won both the county and Northeastern Conference titles.

Larry matriculated to Purdue University majoring in engineering but finished his studies in physical education and chemistry at Ball State University. During his time at Ball State Larry began coaching high school track and realized how much he enjoyed working with teenagers. He continued running during his college years and began marathoning, running three of them in 1979, with a best of 2:52.

Larry moved to Sonoma County in 1981 hoping to get a teaching position. Due to the scarcity of jobs, he began working at OCLI, a local tech company. While still checking on openings for teaching jobs in the summer of 1982 he spied a notice for a cross country coaching position at Montgomery High School. He was hired just days before the season opener. Larry was touched by the sportsmanship and encouragement of coach Jim Underhill at Piner High School and brought that to his coaching. Larry coached for 18 years at MHS beginning with a second place league finish for boys in his first season and winning league in his second year. Highlights of his coaching career include winning North Bay League championships for boy's 5 straight years (12 total), 2 North Bay League titles for girls, and sending many individual boys and girls teams to the CIF State XC Championships. Larry notes that the girls program really took off when Tori became the girl's coach and their coaching careers culminated in a state championship for the girls team in 2000. Larry and Tori have coached many outstanding local runners over their long coaching careers.

In 1987 Larry joined the Empire Runners, looking for a place to develop group training to better his personal running goals. He quickly became involved in many aspects of the club, first as newsletter editor and training director. He was instrumental in developing the Valley Ford Relays with Doug Courtemarche. Larry also started the club's high school cross country support program and later served three years as club president. He has been a competitor and volunteer for many club races. Larry has been team captain for many events including the Mt. Diablo Relay, Hood to Coast Relay, Lake Tahoe Relay and Christmas Relays. The trip in 2008 with 23 Empire Runners to the Boston Marathon was his favorite. Finally, he has had a major impact on the Empire Runners cross country team program along with John Harmon.

To truly appreciate his impact, one just needed to be at the 25th Annual Viking Opener when over seventy of his former athletes returned to compete on the Spring Lake course for the Alumni Race and raised the running level of each race that followed. After that, over 100 athletes and their families spent the rest of the day at Doyle Park picnicking and sharing stories, laughter and tears. As a coach myself, the event answered the question "Is the time worth it?" As a fellow runner, teammate and friend, is the time spent worth it? As an active volunteer in all aspects of our club's production and improvement has that time been worth it? I know Larry would say a resounding YES... and I would too!

*Submitted by Brad Zanetti*