



## 2020 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

### ALPHONSE BERNARD

### BUILDER

Alphonse Bernard, a member of the MRA from its inception to the present, has played roles as athlete, race director, board member and most prominently as a coach.

Alphonse entered the U of M in 1967 where he got his first taste for competitive running with Jim Daly's Bison cross-country teams. In 1972, Alphonse started a teaching career in mostly physics and chemistry and

also began his involvement with the MRA organizing the 1973 Festival du Voyageur 5-mile Road Race before also joining its Board. Alphonse was also the race director for the Bird's Hill 20 km for 3 years, including one year when it was the national championships.

Alphonse started coaching in 1977 developing some seriously talented distance runners, including Claude Berube, Marney Deakin, Colette Desrosiers, Rob Guy, Henry Klassen, Bruce McKay, Darcy Ready, Buddy Voth and Chris Weber with the Takus TC. Several of his athletes qualified for National Championships and Canada Games teams and he even had one, Henry Klassen, qualify for the World Junior Championships (X-Country and track) in 1986. In the early 80's, there was a national program of centres of excellence being formed across Canada, beginning with Toronto and Victoria and Alphonse led the 4th centre in Winnipeg from 1981-83.

Alphonse was the 'toba team MD/D coach at the 1981 and 1985 Canada Games. In 1981, Alphonse also wrote the National Level 2 coaching manual for MD/D coaches.

After a break of about 8 years, Alphonse returned to coaching in 1994 after a transfer to College Louis Riel. The school went on to win 5 provincial cross-country championships and 2 track championships under his guidance as well as 76 individual medals of which 22 were gold until his retirement in 2010.

Thereafter he continued coaching senior athletes including Corey Gallagher, Sheldon Kilcullen and Gina Tranquada.

Alphonse has run regularly in MRA's races starting in 1972 and still doing so 50 years later. His 5 marathons yielded a best of 2:49:21 in 1980's Manitoba Marathon. A 55:30 wind-aided 10 miler and a 34:01 10 k race were other performances he remembers well. He recently placed fourth (2nd Canadian) for his age in the North American Masters Championships in Toronto in 2017 for the 1500.

Alphonse loves the sport and its health benefits and so running into very old age is his next chapter.