

Rob Guy

For younger members of the MRA, you know Rob Guy as the 8 year CEO of Athletics Canada, the overseeing authority for road running in Canada. For the older members, you remember Rob as one of the fastest distance runners Manitoba has produced. When he was in high school, you would not have seen that coming. Rob was on the basketball team at Kelvin High School, where his coach, Hymie Fox, told him that if he wanted to make the team (in Grade 12), he needed to get fit by running cross-country. Although he had not been a runner previously, it soon became evident that Rob was built better for distance running than for basketball. When the outdoor track season started, George Phillips had him running intervals Monday to Friday and his performances improved. It was not until he got to the U of Manitoba, however, that Rob started to emerge as an elite distance runner. As he entered university in 1978, the U of M team was run by Jim Daly and Chris McCubbins and it was a strong team, with the likes of Bob Cook, Bruce McKay and Claude Berube. During Rob's years at U of M, these runners were joined by some equally talented teammates such as Chris Weber, Darcy Ready and the Klassens, Darren and Henry. The team could compete with any in Canada for top end excellence, and were contenders for national cross-country honours.

Over the years, Rob was coached by Alphonse Bernard and Wynn Gmitroski, two of the most successful coaches our province's distance running has ever known. Rob ran quite a few road races, especially the major local 10 km races, but his greatest successes were on the track, including a 13:44 5km at the 1987 Harry Jerome Classic in Vancouver. After the 1988 season, Rob retired from competing and got a job and focused on other life pursuits for the next 15 years. Then his son, Eric (who became an accomplished track athlete in his own right), told his Dad that there was a track meet for his elementary school and Rob went out, saw some of his old running cronies like Wayne McMahon and Larry Switzer, and started to get involved again as a volunteer. He was persuaded to join the Athletics Manitoba Board and then to fill in for its Executive Director during her maternity leave, which turned into a three year term, as she did not return. From that position, he applied for and won the position as CEO of Athletics Canada in 2010 and served there until 2018. He is still coaching (notably for Sam Vincent) and involved in the sport in various ways and can be seen at the finish line of track meets and road races.

In reflecting on his life in athletics, Rob sees his opportunity to help others realize their competitive potential as his most satisfying memory. He fondly recalls how the stars of the day inspired him when he was starting out and is gratified that he could provide motivation to those who came after him. His favourite memory from his running career is the friends he made the good times they had, whether training, racing or travelling together. His favourite road race was the Tribune 10 km that became the Athletes Wear 10 km, where all the top runners of the day would come out to test themselves against one another up and down Wellington Crescent from Assiniboine Park and back. His worst experience in a road race was when he took on the first Manitoba Marathon in 1979, prepared to run fast but not to run that far. He ran a very good first 20 miles and mostly walked the last 6 down Portage Avenue and still finished in around 3 hours. He decided that one marathon was enough.

Rob's best 1500 was 3:43; 3 km was 7:58; 5 km was that 13:44 and 10 km was 29:30. How would you like to have those accomplishments on your resume?!