

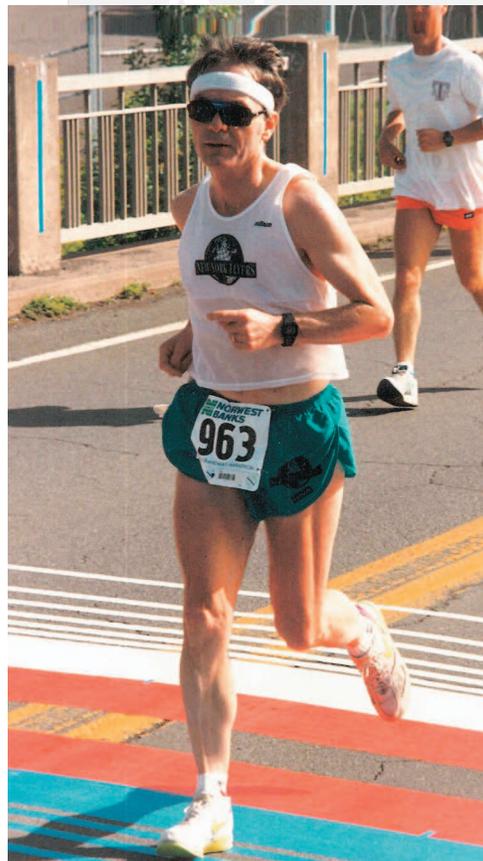
## Spotlight on...Richard Garland

*Donna Rosato*

Sitting in his bedroom listening to a Red Sox game on the radio as a young teenager, Richard Garland suddenly heard a big cheer from the crowd, though nothing of note was going on in the game. It was 1957 and Johnny Kelley (the “Younger”) had just won the Boston Marathon, setting a course record after coming in second five times.

It wasn't until more than 30 years later that Richard realized the significance of Kelley's accomplishment and become a Boston marathoner himself — qualifying to run one of the sport's most challenging races four times after the age of 40.

Richard, who married in graduate school and has two children, took up running in his 40s at the urging of a



**Richard Garland** ran a 32-minute PR at the 1992 Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, MN.

co-worker who wanted a running partner. Richard was game, though he was only an occasional jogger who hadn't exercised regularly since high school when he ran cross-country on a team lead by the driver's ed teacher. “I felt like a lot of people do in middle age that I had to do something to get my lost youth back,” says Richard, who worked in computer systems management at Columbia University after earning a PhD in Physics there. Richard soon was running every lunch hour in Riverside Park.

After joining Bankers Trust in 1985, another co-worker encouraged Richard to enter his first race, the Sunset Classic, a five-mile race in Bloomfield, New Jersey on the Friday before the 4th of July. “I had no idea how fast I would run,” he says. Aiming for an eight minute pace, Richard broke 38 minutes. “That was it, my first race and I was hooked.”

He started doing NYRRC races, often cheered on by his wife Joy. In 1988, he and his Bankers Trust running buddy Sarah signed up for the NYRRC running classes where they met another runner Michelle (Ziamba) Levitte. The threesome — all future Flyers — set their sights on the New York City Marathon.

Richard's first marathon in 1989 was a humbling experience. Hoping to break four hours, he finished in 4:20. Around that time, he met a number of Flyers training in Central



**Sarina Green, Julie Walsh and Richard Garland** at the 100th Boston Marathon in April 1996.

Park and joined the club when it was just a year and a half old.

Disappointed with his marathon times, Richard decided to find a fresh venue. With advice from then brand-new Flyer Coach Cliff Held, Richard revamped his training and in 1992 did Grandma's Marathon in Duluth Minnesota. He not only broke 4 hours (finally) but broke 3:30 to boot, finishing in 3:28 — a 32-minute PR!

Richard hasn't run the NYC marathon since 1992, but he's been extremely active and involved member of the Flyers. Richard was elected Secretary in the Flyers' first elections in 1992 along with President Jerry Flower and served for two years.

Richard's also been a masters captain, served as elections superintendent and organized the first Flyer team for the Hood to Coast Relay in 1997 and

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the Arches Run in Central Park in 2000. Voted Flyer of the Year in 1999, Richard is most proud of his H2C contribution, which has become a seminal event for many Flyers. More than 100 Flyers have run the grueling 195-mile race. "Going to Oregon has been a right of passage" for Flyers, Richard observes.

A veteran of 14 marathons, including four New Yorks, four Bostons, Grandma's, Las Vegas, Chicago, Humboldt Redwoods (in Northern California), Niagara Falls, and Dublin (Ireland), Richard has not tired of running. He still logs up to 60 miles a week when he's in marathon training (next up Vermont City in May). But since retiring in 2001, he has become an avid hiker, fulfilling the dream he's nursed since his high school days of hiking the Appalachian Trail. Richard has hiked 900 miles of that famous trail — nearly all of the northern half — and climbed to the top of more than half of the hundred highest mountains in New England.

Richard sees many parallels between running and hiking. "Runners make good hikers since they love the out-of-doors, are fit and know it takes work and sometimes sweat and dirt to achieve a goal," he says.

But running holds his fondest memories. That includes his first Boston Marathon in 1993 when his father — then 88 — came out to cheer him on. When Richard saw his dad at Cleveland Circle just past the 22-mile mark, he stopped and gave his father a hug.

Though he remains competitive with himself, Richard's view of running has changed since that long-ago day as a teenager when John Kelley's Boston win stuck in his memory. "I used to think of running as an individual undertaking, a singular thing, an individual sport. But after joining the Flyers, I realized it's really not. It's a social thing and it's much more fun to run with other people. Hiking is the same. That's the beauty of it all."



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