



Special Edition of Forever Run

February 24, 2020



Remembering Lou

Runners were saddened to learn that a founder of the NE 65+ Runners Club, Lou Peters, died Friday, February 21 at age 95. Lou was well known at races throughout New England. In 2012 when he was inducted in the NE 65+ Hall of Fame, he had run in more than 1700 races. He served on the club's board of directors for many years and in 2005, he received the Joseph Shea Memorial Award for his outstanding contributions to the club. Lou's presence at races was a reason a number of race directors changed the highest age group award from "70 and above" to awards for runners in their 80's and even up to the 90's, which would include Lou. It was a tradition for many runners to hang around the finish line of a race until they heard the announcer say, "And here comes Lou Peters of Methuen, Mass." and he would be greeted with much-deserved cheers and applause.

The following tribute was posted by the Cataudella Funeral Home of Methuen. As it notes, the funeral service for Lou will be private but a wake will be held at the funeral home, 126 Pleasant Valley Street, Methuen, from 3 to 7 on Wednesday, Feb 26. Lou Peters, a running legend and 65+ club founder, will be missed by all who knew him.

Tribute

Louis M. Peters, 95, of Methuen passed away peacefully Friday, February 21, 2020 at Nevins Nursing Home in Methuen surrounded by his loving family. Beloved son of the late Peter and Mary Peters, he was born in Lawrence, MA, on November 9, 1924.

Raised and educated in Lawrence, he was a graduate of Lawrence High School. A strong and gentle man, Louis enjoyed running, most especially running many local road races, visiting the YMCA, and spending as much time possible with his family. Louis worked for over six decades at Sears as a salesman. He had great determination to complete each job perfectly. Most of all, Louis loved to run and was always ready for any challenge. Louis was a member of the Merrimack Valley Striders, the Mystic Runners and also the New England 65+ Runners Club.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his siblings, Abraham, George, William, Julia, and Anne.

Louis will be sadly missed by his two daughters, Linda Peters of Haverhill, and Karen Touma and her husband, Steven of Salem, NH; adored grandson, Joseph Touma and his wife, Patrice of Salem, NH; and his great-granddaughter, Carmela J. Touma. He also leaves behind several nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend calling hours on Wednesday, February 26, 2020, from 3:00-7:00 PM at Cataudella Funeral Home, 126 Pleasant Valley Street in Methuen. At the request of the family, funeral services and burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Louis memory may be made to the Merrimack Valley Striders, P.O. Box 213, Andover, MA 01810 or New England 65+ Runners Club, care of: Jan Holmquist, 32 Paulson Dr, Burlington, MA 01803.

Lou running with his "posse" celebrating his 90th birthday at the 2014 Run for All Ages 5K race. Note that Lou was given number 90 in honor of the occasion. The article below written by co-editor Byron Petrakis, appeared in the April 2015 issue of "Forever Run."



Running With A Legend

by Byron Petrakis

November 1, 2014 may have been a cold and drizzly day for an outdoor birthday party, but I could think of no better way of thumbing my nose at both the weather and old age than by joining the Lou Peters "Running Posse" to honor indomitable Lou on his 90th birthday at the N.E. 65+ Running Club's 13th annual Run for All Ages. Outgoing club president Tom Wylie, Dan Dodson, George Bisson, Leo St. Louis and I formed Lou's honor guard as we escorted him around the scenic Lake Quannapowit 5K course.

Along the way, we kept up a steady chatter on topics ranging from observations on our fellow competitors ("Come on, Lou; you've got to catch that hot looking 80-year old up ahead") to infamous quotations from U.S. presidents past and present. As Dan Dodson and I recalled some of the more outrageous presidential quotes, Lou kept up a steady 14:57 pace despite our banter. I simply can't remember what prompted us to indulge in such political irreverence, but I think running can have a liberating effect, freeing one from the restraints of political correctness. Our litany of presidential utterances started with Richard Nixon's "I am not a crook!" and ended with Barrack Obama's "you can keep your doctor." In between, we came up with Bill Clinton's "I did not have sexual relations with that woman!" and George W. Bush's "Mission Accomplished." Had Lou wanted to contribute to our treasure trove, he could have gone back to Herbert Hoover and FDR, but that was before the time of his running posse!

As we rounded the last turn and headed toward the finish, newly installed club president Jan Holmquist, who earlier had finished in a course record time of 22:52 for her age group, honored Lou by escorting him to the finish line where Lou was cheered enthusiastically by fellow runners and spectators alike.

Lou's finish of 46:25 was soon followed by a celebration that involved presenting him with a suitably large birthday card signed by his fellow runners, a birthday cake, and flowers. Through it all, Lou's gracious smile and resilient spirit warmed the admiring crowd on a cold and windy day.

During my return home to New Hampshire, I kept thinking about Lou's presence at this race as an enduring gift and inspiration to runners of all ages. To me, Lou embodies an exemplary attitude toward age that is as old-and as timely-as Homer's praise in the Iliad of Nestor, the oldest Greek adviser in The Trojan War: "Nestor yielded no ground to withering old age" (Book 10, line 91). Like the legendary Nestor, Lou acknowledges the reality of advanced age but refuses to be defined by it.

May we all run like Lou, whatever our age!

Lou Peters wrote several articles for "Forever Run." This one, published in the Oct. 2018 edition, shows both Lou's sense of humor and his love for running.

Great Day at Ogunquit Beach, Maine

by Lou Peters

The race started at 9 am on the beach, 5 miles on the hard sand (2.5 miles out and 2.5 miles back.) As we get ready to run the beach, a voice was heard

singing the National Anthem. The voice sounded like a young girl's voice. I couldn't believe it! A young girl about 4-5 years old was the singer!!! I had tears in my eyes! When she got through, she received a great ovation from all the runners. Now it was time to run the race, 5 miles on nice HARD SAND.

The Race Director shot the gun and all the runners took off. I started in the back of the pack as I wasn't feeling very good. It turned out to be okay. There was no wind, so I just trotted along all by myself. I have run this race several times. I caught up to two young females and they asked if they could go with me! (When there are two beautiful ladies, I never refuse - you old dog!) Now they wanted to pick it up so I left them which made my run be all by myself and very lonely. I went to see the girls and noticed they were coming back, so now I had some company and it felt good!

Finally, I could see the finish line ahead. That picked me up. I started to jog a little. I felt much better because I was near the finish line. I got quite an ovation even though I was last! What a relief to get to the finish line. I hope to come back next year (if I am still here)!

God bless the females that stayed with me and God bless the Race Director - Charlie Farrington - for putting on a great race. And last but not least, God bless the young girl who sang the National Anthem.

p.s. If you have a chance, take a ride to this beautiful beach - you will love it!

Remembrances

The following are some of the thoughts that came in as word went out about Lou. If you have a remembrance of Lou you would like to share, you can email it to Jan Holmquist at: jholmquist@mspca.org

Daniel Dodson

Nice pre-race tributes were made Saturday at the "Fudgcicle 5K" in Tewksbury and Sunday in Haverhill. 65+ member Leo St. Louis wore a special "in memoriam" handmade shirt at the Haverhill race with dates of Lou's birth & death. He and I (Lou's 2 chauffeurs) intentionally crossed the finish line together with our arms pointing up to Lou!!!!

His final race was at the "Santa's Toy Trot" in Merrimac, MA in December with lines of runners chanting "Lou Lou Lou Lou" as he came down the driveway to the finish line for the final time. He had turned 95 in November. At the "Fudgcicle 5K" many folks ran by me and chanted "Lou Lou Lou" as a tribute. Runners expressed their sympathy to me and my answer was always the same -- "he didn't belong to me Lou belonged to ALL of us." It has been an emotional week-end.

Rick Bayko

Good ol' Lou. It was a tough final year for him, as several times he showed up just to watch because of having balance issues. It was good to see him participating again at the Santa's Toy Trot in Merrimac in December. He kept moving to the best of his ability. An inspiration for the rest of us to be sure. I too hope that he's doing a 5K today in a better place. R.I.P. (Run In Peace) Lou!

John Gibbons

Very sad news. Such an inspiration. He was a fixture at the Sea Dogs 5k every May. He will be missed. Might have to drag my butt up to Maine to run in his honor.

Jerry LeVasseur

Very sad. God be with him. Maine will miss Lou

Byron Petrakis

Lou's last race was the Winners Circle 2 mile Santa's Toy Trot on December 15 in Merrimac, MA. Lou loved that race and when he approached the finish line, he was guided in by a chorus of people shouting "Lou! Lou! Lou!" He was a man for all seasons and an inspiration to runners of all ages.

He will be missed.

Rick Stetson

Lou belonged to three running clubs but there was a special place in his heart for the club he helped start, the NE 65+ Runners Club. He enjoyed wearing his 65+ singlet and hat and loved reading about his fellow club members in the 65+ newsletter, "Forever Run."

Steve Viegas

My paths crossed with Lou Peters when he became a frequent participant along with Dan Dodson in the Mystic Runners weekly race in Wakefield. I time the weekly event and socialize afterward. This is how I came to know Lou.

I came to admire this humble and quiet individual. He was in his eighties and still working as an appliance salesman at Sears Roebuck. Always a gentleman, he participated in several running events a week. Like so many in our NE65+ Runners Club, he was a role model of how to live an active lifestyle as we age.

Our club wanted to have a special recognition of his 90th birthday five years ago. Jan Holmquist arranged for a cake to share after the Run for All Ages. Mother Nature didn't cooperate. It rained cats and dogs. Nonetheless, a large number of our members gathered under our club's 10x14 tent to sing Happy Birthday to Lou and share the cake. He was grateful for the gesture and I'm sure that all of us who shared the moment still cherish it.

As I passed Lou in races every week, I would shout encouragement, "Way to go, Lou! Way to go!"

Way to go, indeed. Thank you, Lou, for your long life and shining example of friendship and athleticism!





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