

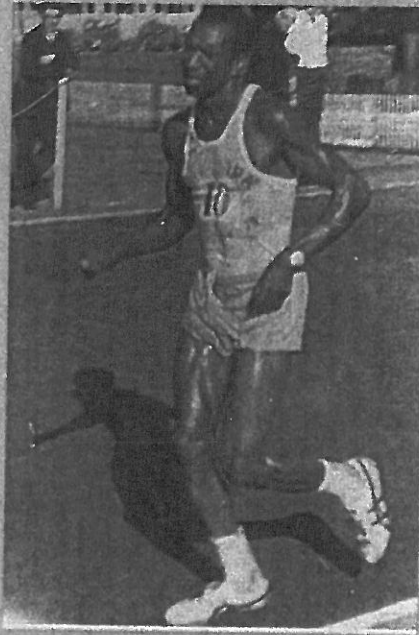
**Great Polarity Therapist
and Athlete**

Has Passed On

In Memoriam

Ted Corbitt

1919-2007



Ted Corbitt, one of the greatest long distance runners in history and a student and practitioner of polarity therapy has passed away at the age of 88. Ted was a student in the Polarity training program offered in 1977 in NYC by Alan Jay and attended by Dr. John Beaulieu, Phillip Aberman and myself (Lewis Harrison).- Ted continued his studies with me the following year and also studied with Pierre Pannetier. Though we all knew he was a serious long distance athlete, Ted's quiet demeanor and...

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In Memorium: Ted Corbitt (1919-2007)

— Lewis Harrison, RPP, RPE

...humility hid from us the fact that he was one of the most respected athletes in the world.

A kind man, of both style and substance he exhibited the best that Polarity Therapy represents.

I had not thought about Ted for a number of years however the ½ page obituary in the New York Times this morning brought back the memory of what a delightful person and role model he was for all of us including the athletes he continued to train over the years.

What follows is a brief history of Ted Corbitt's Life:

Though little known to the general public, Ted Corbitt (January 31, 1919 – December 12, 2007)[1][2][3] was a key figure in the history of running. In a long career, he held many records as an athlete and was equally influential as an official of running organizations. Corbitt is often called "the father of long distance running." He was an ultramarathon pioneer, helping to revive interest in the sport in the United States in the 1960s and 70s. New York Times columnist Robert Lipsyte called Corbitt "the last surviving spiritual elder of the modern running clan". In a *Runner's World* feature naming him "lifetime achievement honoree", writer Gail Kislewitz called Corbitt "[a] living symbol of durability and longevity". [1]

Corbitt also developed standards to accurately measure courses and certify races. The technique involved the use of a calibrated bicycle and was widely adopted worldwide.

Personal and professional life

Ted Corbitt was born on a cotton farm near Dunbarton, South Carolina. He ran track in high school and at the University of Cincinnati. Due to racial discrimination, which was common at the time, he was sometimes banned from track meets when white athletes refused to compete against him, being

a black man. After army service in World War II, Corbitt earned a graduate degree in physical therapy from New York University, where he later lectured. He was a physiotherapist for more than 40 years. [4]

Racing and training

Corbitt competed in the 5,000 metres, the 10,000 metres and the Marathon at the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. He won the Philadelphia Marathon in 1954. At various times, Corbitt held the U.S. track records for distances of 25 miles, the Marathon, 40 miles, 50 miles and 100 miles. He remained a nationally competitive runner well into his fifties.

For many years, Corbitt ran more than 20 miles a day from his home in a distant suburb of New York City to his job as a physiotherapist in Manhattan. On some days, he also ran home. At his peak, Corbitt ran up to 200 miles a week, far more than almost any other distance runner. Corbitt ran most of his miles at a fast pace. One workout he often ran involved 17 miles on the track, followed by 13 miles on roads. One week in 1962, Corbitt ran 300 miles. He then travelled to England and competed in the 54 mile London to Brighton road race, finishing fourth. Corbitt's "killer weeks" continue to inspire some elite distance runners to this day.

Other contributions to running

Corbitt served as an unpaid official of many running organizations, including the Amateur Athletic Union. He was the first President of the Road Runners Club of America and the third President of the New York Road Runners Club. Corbitt served on various boards and committees for over 50 years. He helped create the masters division for runners over 40.

In the early 1960s, Corbitt led efforts to accurately measure and certify long distance road race courses in the United States. The technique, based on the work of John Jewell of Great Britain,[5] used a calibrated bicycle wheel in conjunction with a revolution counter. This method is still used today.

As an official, Corbitt was often the anonymous "inside man" who remained out of the limelight and left promotion and public relations to others. Corbitt never coached, wrote a book or became a fitness guru. In a career that

spanned decades, he earned almost no money from running. Corbitt is revered by a small group of knowledgeable runners, but remains unknown to almost everyone else.

A measure of public recognition finally came in 1998, when Corbitt was among



the first five runners to be inducted into the National Distance Running Hall of Fame. Corbitt was also inducted into the American Ultrarunning Hall of Fame on its

inauguration in April of 2006.

At 87, Corbitt was still volunteering at ultra-marathon races in New York and sometimes even competing. As recently as 2003, he completed a 24-hour race by walking 68 miles, finishing 17th in a field of 35. Some runners were awed by his presence; others had no idea who he was.

Corbitt never smoked and his only drink was a single can of beer while in the army. He practiced self-massage, integrated energetically based and vibrational healing approaches to his work including polarity therapy, chewed every mouthful of food, and drank lots of water. He died in Houston, Texas in 2007.

References

1. ^ a b "Heroes of Running", interview by Gail Kislewitz in *Runner's World*, December 2007, p. 70. Corbitt confirmed 1919 to the interviewer as his year of birth.
2. ^ Corbitt: The Story of Ted Corbitt, Long Distance Runner. John Chodes, Tafnews Press, 1974. The year of birth given in this book, 1920, and related age data, are erroneous per the preceding source, the athlete himself.
3. ^ Distance running inspiration Ted Corbitt passes away at 88
4. ^ "Ted Corbitt, a Pioneer in American Distance Running, Dies at 88" (New York Times obituary by Frank Litsky) Retrieved 2007-12-13
5. ^ "John Jewell - the developer of modern course measurement in England"
6. Ted Corbitt: Father of Long Distance Running *Running Times*
7. Marathon: Miles to Go and Promises to Keep *New York Times*
8. Ted Corbitt: An Ultrarunning Pioneer *Ultrarunning Magazine*
9. **Ted Corbitt's 1964 monograph on road race course measurement**

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ing the photographs in this article.**