

**Gary Corbitt's Remarks  
New York City Marathon  
Hall of Fame Induction  
October 31, 2013**

**I had a unique perspective being a part of the early days of the New York Road Runners Club. I was a child - teenager watching the foundation of our sport being built. Today I want to recognize the names of people I witnessed making history.**

**NYRR history starts with the NYPC and Mr. Joseph Yancey an African American who co-founded the club in 1936. There wouldn't have been a NYRR in 1958 without the Pioneer Club. The Pioneer Club was special; an integrated club made up all nationalities and abilities. The NYPC was making civil rights history in Harlem and the Bronx during an era of racial segregation. The beauty and genius of Mr. Yancey was coaching an athletic team that was a vehicle for his primary mission of building men of character. Talk with Elliott Denman NYPC race walker who's here today to further understand this.**

**Pamela Cooper in her fine book "The American Marathon" states the NYPC is significant in its contribution to the democratization of sport, particularly running. The club helped to invent the mass marathon culture that we'll witness again on Sunday. The huge open fields of today's marathons owe much to Joe Yancey's acceptance of all young men as potential athletes.**

**My father joined the NYPC in 1947. He considered his teammate John Sterner a race walker and long distance runner the founder of NYRR. John was also one of my father's mentors in course measurement approaches. The Cherry Tree Marathon was one of first events staged by the NYRRC: New York Association in 1959. The race was New York City's showcase marathon during the 1960s run along the Sedgwick Avenue course at MacCombs Dam Park and Yankee Stadium in the Bronx. I believe this was also the first road course to be certified in the U.S.**

**A review of the 47 members of the club in 1959 shows that nearly half were pioneer club athletes.**

**Of the nine presidents of NYRR, four represented the pioneers along with my father were Nat Cirulnick, John Conway and Allan Steinfeld**

**Women were unable to compete in distance greater than 220 yards in the U.S. during the 1950s. Chris McKenzie and Ann Cirulnick were leaders trying to change this. They were married to Gordon and Nat, NYPC teammates, and were the original running couples in the 1950s and early 1960s.**

**Other NYPC members who worked tirelessly for our sport were Kurt Steiner who gave me my first basketball, Harry Murphy who recruited my father to join in 1947; Lou White who gave me my first and only motorcycle ride; Jimmy Borden who went on to start the United Athletic Association, and NYPC Coaches Ed Levy and Horace Wall should also be cited.**

**At 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the club in 1983, my father wrote the following: The most visible member of the club is Fred Lebow who roams far and wide taking care of running business. Many people mostly “unsung heroes” have pitched in to make the NYRRC what it is today.**

**Barry Geisler a leader in age-group track and cross-country programs. Vincent Chiappetta worked on a local and national level towards updating rules and procedures. He worked hard to allow women to participate and was instrumental in races taking place in Central Park. Joe Kleiner mann may have put in more hours promoting long-distance running than anyone in New York area running history.**

**Kathrine Switzer who established the Avon Products running program which further benefited women runners around the globe.**

**Nina Kuscsik an officer in the RRC and AAU and inspiration and role model.**

**Aldo Scandurra an early ultramarathon promoter who had influence on all governing aspects of our sport local, national, and international.**

**Allan Steinfeld who became an influential force with the international marathon race directors.**

**My father said that each of these individuals made the sport more runner friendly.**

**This honor is special to me because NYRR was my father's home base for all his many contributions to the sport. The production and distribution of NYRR newsletter now called New York Runner was a family affair. It was printed on a mimeograph machine on our kitchen table. I distributed the newsletter at the major races like the Cherry Tree Marathon or 9 mile cross-country race at Van Cortlandt Park. My mother Ruth would mail the remaining newsletters. Race entry forms, publications and other collateral materials during this era were all printed on our kitchen table.**

**I always like to point how important my mother Ruth was to all my father's accomplishments. She was always supportive with his legendary training, his administrative paper work that kept him typing past midnight, and his continuing education as physical therapy clinician and teacher.**

**I want to thank you for attending this ceremony. A number of you were dear friend of my father and I'm thankful you can share this day with me. In researching his life and fielding recent questions from reporters, I've gained an even better understanding of what my father was about. The spiritual side was reflected in how he would always help people, and how he merged his physical therapy knowledge to assist anyone who asked. In giving, he was receiving. He was constantly taking continuing education classes. So in helping people, he was furthering his knowledge. That's what he really was about.**

**I thank Mary and George and the New York Road Runners for this honor, and let's do all we can to remember these pioneers and preserve this history of our sport. Thank You.**

**Video of Induction Speeches:**

**<http://www.runnersworld.com/new-york-city-marathon/legends-1976-new-york-city-marathon-key-to-running-boom>**