



Ted Corbitt

Ted Corbitt, the Father of Distance Running, Passes Away

UC Hall of Famer is remembered through life long accomplishments

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NEW YORK, NY --- Former University of Cincinnati athlete and Hall of Famer Ted Corbitt passed away this past Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at the age of 88. Anyone who has ever put in the time and dedication for the sport of long distance running is sure to know this legendary name and the captivating stories behind it.

Corbitt, the "Father of Long Distance Running," was ultimately known for his overall fascination and personal commitment to the endeavors of the human body. Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, the young Corbitt often ran to and from school, giving him the first of many lessons in the techniques of running. In doing so, Corbitt became intrigued with the many ways in which the human body worked. Running was soon to be a natural part of everyday life.

While mostly sticking with short distance competitions, the idea of long distance running interested him. Reading a local newspaper article about the '36 and '39 Boston Marathons, Corbitt was stunned to find out people ran that far. It wasn't until Corbitt moved to downtown Cincinnati that his running career took off. Being a senior in high school, Corbitt's first acknowledgements of success occurred when he received an invite to join the celebrated Cincinnati Gym Club.

"The letter was obviously based on my records alone, not by any club member who had attended my meets, because the club was restricted to whites only," Corbitt once explained to *First Marathons*. "That was only one of many color hurdles I had to cross to be accepted in my sport."

During Corbitt's time at UC, Jim Crow laws and segregation policies often kept him from participating in interstate meets and American Athletic Union competitions. What kept him going, however, were the words of Arthur Newton, credited for establishing the ultra marathon. "Blacks would never run distance. They just don't have what it takes to do the distance." As unfortunate as this statement was, Corbitt acknowledged that Newton was a man of his times and pushed himself with enormous perseverance and preparation to become a better athlete.

Setting national records for the 25-, 40-, 50-, and 100-mile runs and becoming UC's only Olympic Track & Field participant, this phenomenal athlete did not run his first distance marathon until the age of 32, with a time of 2:48:42 at the 1951 Boston Marathon. Through his career of 200,000 plus miles of persistent running and being inducted into 10 separate Hall of Fames, Corbitt ran in 199 marathons, including a 24-hour race at Walton-on Thames, where he completed 134.6 miles and finished in third place.

Though running was a huge part of Corbitt's life, the constant study of the human body should also be credited to this athlete's many accomplishments. Becoming a physical therapist in New York City, Corbitt used his own body as a laboratory, always testing new training techniques just to see how much the body could endure. Sometimes running 200-300 mile weeks, Corbitt also created a method of measuring road courses and has verified hundreds of marathon paths, including the New York City marathon course.

Although Corbitt became a big name in the sport of distance running, his deflection of attention made him a very humble and genuine person who only wanted people to advance themselves as a better athlete.

UC Track & Field coach Bill Schnier holds Corbitt in high regard. "Ted should be remembered not only for his contribution to distance running, but also for his credible research on the techniques of running and his overall compassion to help others."