

## Stuart Summerhayes



Stuart Summerhayes took up race walking at age 55. In his second race ever, he set an age group record and never looked back. Stuart competed at most of the CMAA track and Field championships from 1991 to 2005 and won his age group every time. Until 1999 he was the fastest male walker overall in each of the championships. He competed in races from 1500m to 20K, indoors and outdoors, on track and road. He was a versatile walker whose age graded scores were consistently in the mid-80s for all distances. Stuart was forced to retire from race walking by illness in the winter of 2010.

Stuart competed in 6 WAVA/WMA Championships – Finland, Scarborough (non-stadia), Buffalo, Gateshead, Puerto Rico and Spain. His highest placings were two 4ths in Puerto Rico and one in Spain. He won gold in both walks in the World Masters Games in Edmonton in 2005. In addition Stuart competed several times in the North America, Central America and Caribbean Regional Championships winning 6 gold, 2 silver, and 1 bronze medal. Stuart also competed in US Masters track and field championships and consistently placed in the top 5 of his age group in North American rankings (and as high as 2nd).

Stuart did not just compete in masters races. He was never afraid to step up to the line against anyone of any age, including national team members and Olympians. The Weinacker Cup race is an Ontario vs Michigan event featuring the best each can bring to the race. Stuart was named to the Athletics Ontario-supported team seven times and wore the Ontario singlet proudly. His last appearance was in 2009 when he not only scored points for the winning Ontario team, he also set an M75 record.

From Sherry Watts - [One of my favourite memories in sport was a year that Ontario was lacking in youngsters to represent the province. As the chef d'equipe, I had one national team member to build the team around. I put the call out to the masters-age walkers. Stuart was the first to respond,

rearranging his schedule to join us in Michigan. Three more masters subsequently signed up. On paper we did not have a chance to win but we brought home the trophy. I keep that team photo on display – a bunch of tired but very, very happy walkers.]

Stuart competed in various Ontario open racewalk championships, competing against Olympians and national team members 40 or 50 years his junior. Three times Stuart won the OTFA 20K championship and he placed 1st and 3rd in the 10K championships all while over the age of 65. Stuart was the first and only old age pensioner to win a provincial athletics championships, the 10K Road Walk and to prove it was no fluke, he won the 20K Road Walk Championships a few months later.

### **Stuart's records**

Of the records currently recognized, Stuart set 30 and still holds 24, more than any other Canadian race walker. He also set 4 other records in categories which are no longer kept by CMAA. One of his records still stands from 1991 and two more from 1992.

	Currently holds	Previously held
Outdoor track 1500m	M60, 65, 70	M55
Outdoor track mile	M60, 65, 70	
Outdoor track 3000m	M60, 70	M55, 65
Outdoor track 10000m	M70, 75	
Indoor track 1500m	M55, 75	M60, 65
Indoor track 3000m	M55, 60	
Indoor track 5000m	M55, 60, 65, 70	
5K road	M65,70, 75	
10K road	M55, M75	
15K road	M65, 70	

Also 8K M65 Hour M55, 60, 65 (no longer kept by CMA).

Stuart founded the Cambridge Race Walkers Club in 1992 and continues as its coach and administrator. He introduced many walkers to masters track and field.

Stuart was a finalist for the Cambridge Athlete of the Year seven times and was inducted into the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame in 2006.

Stuart Summerhayes was a fixture in masters track and field for 20 years. Inducted in 2010 into the Ontario Masters Hall of Fame.

Stuart passed away shortly after his induction. His obituary said, "Stuart Summerhayes completed his last race, crossing the final finish line sooner than he wished, in a time of 76 years, 8 months. There was no gold medal at the end of this race, but with a quiet smile and positive outlook he allowed himself to rest on November 7, 2010"