

Ray Cardinal - Athlete

- sprint records still lasting from 1983!
 - 10.8 in 100m
 - 22.21 in 200m
 - 47.64 in 400m
- ... at age 36!



Ray Cardinal -
2013

Ontario Masters Athletics
Hall of Fame



Ray Cardinal - Athlete Category

There are many participating today in Masters in Canada who have looked at previous records, and wondered, Who is this guy - Ray Cardinal - that in 2013 still holds records from 1983 - 30 years and still unbroken? At age 36 100 metres - 10.8, 22.21 in the 200 metres, and 47.64 in the 400! When other records of his from his 40's have been broken, it's been rare. We tracked him down in Alberta. He says he was influenced by the coach that said to him, "When you lose, say nothing. When you win, say even less." Due to knee issues, the spikes were put aside, but in the years since, Ray coached high school, university, and blind athletes to provincial and national titles, and world medals. He served Canada in the RCMP, with the United Nations Peacekeeping in Kosovo, and at a War Crimes Tribunal. These endeavours earned him a Peacekeeping medal by the Government of Canada, and a Queens Golden Jubilee medal. So the man that ran so fast those years ago did not slow down! We were honoured to have Ray Cardinal with us from Alberta, to induct him into our Hall of Fame of 2013.

Ray Cardinal in His Own Words

My Government Service:

- Member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police from 1966 to 1983;
- Revenue Canada Interdiction and Intelligence Division (now Canada Border Agency) from 1983 to 1991;
- moved from Ottawa to Calgary in August 1987

In early 1987, I realized that if I stayed in Ottawa my son who was 7 years old would grow up without knowing his Grandparents. (I was born and raised in Alberta.) Consequently I researched transferring to Alberta. At the time I was a Senior Intelligence officer with Revenue Canada Customs (the now Canada Border Agency), interdiction and intelligence Division. I was able to secure a post in the Customs Alberta Region but at a lower rank and pay. I accepted the post as a Regional Intelligence Officer.

- Investigator for the Missing Children Society of Canada in Calgary 1992 to 1994;
- Police Constable for the Louis Bull Police Service in Hobbema Alberta from 1994 to 1996;
- Correctional Service of Canada from 1996 to 2009; Wetaskiwin Alberta, when I retired.

In 1994 after the Missing Children Society I became a recycled police officer at the Louis Bull First Nations reserve in Hobbema Alberta. Two years later I had an opportunity to return to the Federal Government in the Correctional Service of Canada as a Correctional Manager. In 2000 I was chosen to go to Kosovo on a three month United Nations Peacekeeping Mission. After my Mission was complete I was hired by the United Nations to continue with the peacekeeping and peace building. I returned home in June of 2003. A few months later I was on another UN assignment to Freetown Sierra Leone where I stayed until December 2009. Sierra Leone was a War Crimes Tribunal to prosecute those who were responsible for Crimes against humanity in a horrible civil war that had lasted 10 years (over blood diamonds). I was the Warden of the war crimes Detention unit.

In December 2009 my Mission was completed so I returned home and retired from active service. On December 31, 2010 I married my wife Muna.

While in the Correctional Service I went on leave of absence and worked for the United Nations as a Peace Keeper in Kosovo former Yugoslavia from 2000 to 2003. I came home to Canada for 10 months then back with the United Nations at a War Crimes Tribunal in Freetown Sierra Leone (West Africa) from 2004 to 2009.

- awarded a Peacekeeping medal by our Canadian Government
- awarded a Queens Golden Jubilee medal

Track and Field Coaching and Competing:

My 7 year old son and I left Ottawa by car in early August of 1987. We stopped in Toronto so I could compete in the 1987 Pentathlon. I really sucked in the field events, i.e. long jump where I finished dead last, discus was not much better, then my sweet and lovely 200 m event - I ran it in 21.9 seconds, scored my thousand points and came up to 3rd place. Then came the javelin where I placed in the middle of the pack and I was in second place. I can't remember how many points back I was but

I needed to win the 1500 by almost a lap. I set a blistering pace knowing that the pent athletes would not be able to match my pace. After 800m I was comfortable that I would win and settled in to maintain my lead ... when it was over I won the pentathlon by 3 points. I took home the trophy.

Shortly after arriving in Calgary I joined the Calgary Track and Field Club and took on coaching the middle distance group. I took one year off work to coach full time with the Calgary (CALTAF) Calgary Track and Field Club) 1991 to 1992; I was with CALTAF from 1987 to 1994 when I moved to Wetaskiwin Alberta.

I also coached myself to prepare for the International Police games in Sydney Australia in 1984. At the same time I took on coaching Keith Myette a B1, totally blind athlete. He qualified to go to Seoul in 1988 as part of the Canadian team in both the 400 and 800 m events. Just prior to Seoul I went with the Canadian police team to Sydney Australia sponsored by Brinks Canada who paid all my expenses plus a per diem for food. I went on to Seoul and arrived there in time for the opening ceremonies. Keith placed third in the 800m event and set a new Canadian record of 2:08 with me as his guide runner. He finished fourth in the 400m event.

In Sydney I won my signature 400m event easily, won the 200 m and 800 m events, silver in the 400 relay and gold in the 1600 relay.

When I returned to Calgary I coached many of my high school and university athletes to success in junior and national championships, provincial titles in the 800, 1500, cross country, 10000 and even marathon.

In 1992 I was the Head Coach of the Canadian Blind team that went to Assen Holland for the disabled world championships. My team won a record number of medals in all three places. My star blind athlete Keith Myette placed second in the 800m event in 2:03, another Canadian record, and defeated his rival from England.

I injured my left knee in a basketball game in 1983 and it came back to haunt me in later years. I had to give up running which was one of the hardest things that I had to live through. I recently had knee replacement surgery and I can now dance again but I am not allowed to run.

My 47:64 second 400 m event in 1984 was a world police record which stood for close to 20 years before it was broken. This time

also placed me in an 11th place ranking outdoors in Canada 1984. At the same time I was ranked 6th in Canada indoors with my time of 48:87 when I placed 5th at the Canadian Indoors in Sherbrooke Quebec, 1983.

I credit my coach Tom McWilliams for the success I had in athletics both physically and mentally. Tom said to me in the early days when I was losing races - "If you lose, say nothing. If you win say even less." My high school teacher said, "A loser never wins, a winner never quits." There are many other people that provided inspiration to me - Bob Stavely, Ken Parker, Roger Burroughs, John Fitzgerald, Ray Elrick, Joe Burke, my fellow athletes, the Masters group, Cecil Paul, Wally Gordon, Marta Piresferreira, Mary Smith, Juan Stocker, Basil Tomlinson who taught me how to run 6 minute miles in training, my family and others.