



### **Master Harriers of the Year Award - History**

In 1997 in Dallas, TX, Bill Quinlisk, attended his first USATF annual meeting as the Masters LDR and Masters Cross Country delegate from the Niagara Association. With 28 years of coaching, administration and officiating experience, 46 year-old Bill Quinlisk had just become the inaugural President of the new Genesee Valley Harriers (Rochester, NY) club in the fall of 1996. This new club was one of the founding Elite Development Clubs of USATF. While attending the General Sessions of Masters LDR, Bill noticed that all of the annual and Hall of Fame awards were going to road racers. He questioned why there were no awards dedicated to Master cross country runners. Masters LDR Chair Jerry Crockett suggested that Bill return to next year's annual meeting with a proposal for such an award and it would be discussed.

At the 1998 USATF Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL, Bill Quinlisk was once again back as the Niagara Association Masters LDR and Masters Cross Country representative. This was the first year of the USATF National Club Cross Country Championships which was held in Orlando at the Disney Wide World of Sports' Complex on the last day of the annual meeting. It was hot and humid. During General Session #1 of the Masters LDR Committee meetings, Carole Langenbach was appointed as the first Masters LDR Cross Country Representative to the newly created USATF Cross Country Council. Bill Quinlisk presented a rudimentary proposal to create an annual award honoring the Master Men's and Master Women's Cross Country Runners of the Year. Discussion ensued about the number of qualifying events and a rating system. Bill Quinlisk and Carole Langenbach were directed to develop a formal proposal for next year's annual meeting.

At the 1999 USATF annual meeting in Los Angeles, CA, Masters LDR proposed and approved a requirement for the mandatory use of age/gender "back numbers" at all Master LDR Championships including cross country starting in 2000. Before 2000, the use of back bibs was optional and left up to the Local Organizing Committee's decision. A new requirement for verification of date of birth for all Masters was also approved. Bill Quinlisk was now becoming a ~~main~~ fixture at the Master LDR General Sessions. A Master Harriers of the Year Award proposal was presented by Bill Quinlisk and accepted by the Masters LDR Committee to begin in 2000. The awards would be based on the age graded results from all national masters cross

country championships held between annual meetings. The results would be independently age graded for each event because of the inherent differences when comparing age graded results from different events (i.e., terrain, weather, accuracy of measurement, etc.).

The Cross Country Council would review nominations and vote on the winners.

At the 2000 USATF annual meeting in Albuquerque, NM, the Cross Country Council selected Tom Dalton and Carolyn Smith-Hanna as the inaugural winners of the Master Harriers of the Year Award.

Notable Master Cross Country Milestones:

- 2001 - Carole Langenbach, the Masters LDR Representative to the Cross Country Council, proposed master men and master women's distances of 6k for the Winter XC nationals and 10k for the fall XC nationals beginning in 2002. The distances were accepted on a trial basis. Other national Master cross country championship bids could be accepted at other distances.
- 2002 - Bill Quinlisk proposed that Masters cross country be scored by place rather than by time. Eligibility rule changes were announced that eliminate all-star or national teams at all USATF LDR championships including Master events
- 2005 – Carole Langenbach steps down as Masters Cross Country Rep and recommends Bill Quinlisk as her successor. Approved by Masters LDR.