

Robert (Bob) Nagle

The incomparable Robert (Bob) Nagle joined Longboat Roadrunners back in 1984. It was clear to many within the club at the time, that we had been blessed with a most remarkable individual – in it for the long term. He made friends easily & quickly immersed himself in every aspect of the club, always ready to do the important work & ‘heavy lifting’ when needed – especially when it came to unpacking & packing the club equipment locker. In that regard, he was the undisputed master! No doubt his spirit would be thrilled to learn of the move into a more spacious locker – with shelves to boot! (Fall 2019).



Bob started running after major heart surgery when he was 30, competing in his first Boston marathon several years later. He made several more trips to Beantown, including the 100th anniversary in 1996 (not running, but supporting his club mates & cheering on his better half Wendi Hanger), and was part of the 23- strong club contingent in 2007, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Tom Longboat’s win in 1907 – finishing in 4:31. He was a well respected school teacher by trade – George Vanier Secondary School and Western Tech were two institutions that benefited greatly from his dedication to excellence. He would usually run after work (sometimes during lunch) to preserve his sanity & relieve stress -he found running the closest thing to religion... uplifting, enabling and purifying! Bob was a fierce competitor on the roads and a key player on numerous club teams – a familiar face at countless races within the GTA and southern Ontario.

If there was a job to do or volunteers needed for an upcoming project, you could always count on Bob to jump in and make it happen. Working with Bob was always a pleasure, as there was usually wine involved! He was active on many fronts:

Club Transportation Manager. An important, sometimes thankless job at times. The role tested his patience on numerous occasions – however, he would always respond with his usual smile and get the job done.

Club Dragon Boat team ‘Wildfire’. Many will remember our dragon boat team that garnered a considerable level of respect within the dragon boat community back in the 90s. Fitting that Bob would take on the role of helmsman with the team, responsible for the safety and welfare of his fellow paddlers – that was Bob.

Island Course Manager. Bob was a key player in the ongoing success of both the Longboat Island Run & the Sunset Shuffle, especially in his role as course manager of the Island Run. He kept a close eye on the safety, maintenance & integrity of the course – his attention to detail was legendary. A problem in the eyes of Bob was simply a solution waiting to be found!

Longboat Ravine Run. Bob was part of the city-wide campaign against the building of the controversial Spadina Expressway back in the 60s – finally cancelled in 1971. The route would have included numerous ravines in central Toronto. John & Toni Lyng organized & hosted several club ravine runs – a social run that helped to familiarize club members with the geography and history of the Central Ravines and Belt Line Trails in midtown Toronto. The run followed by a brunch at the Lyngs’ home and a slide show presented by Bob telling the story of how the concerned citizens of Toronto stopped the expressway, and preserved the Nordheimer and Cedarvale Ravines in their natural state. An exciting story only Bob could tell!



Bob & Wendi Hanger hosted several memorable **Halloween** bashes at their abode in the west end. As they say... ‘What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas..!’ So will keep details of those raucous evenings to myself!

It’s hard to put into words the profound impact Bob had during his many years with the club. His sly off beat sense of humour, encouraging demeanor and above all his selfless sense of duty, dedication and the ever-ready smile endeared Bob to all who knew him. A tireless mentor to many, he instinctively knew when someone needed a kind word or helping hand. Quite simply, being around Bob put a positive spin on the day – the Ultimate Team player.

Our great friend Bob Nagle sadly passed away in March (2019). His Celebration of Life at the High Park Club was jam packed with many Longboaters (past and present), family and friends... and yes... there was plenty of wine on tap! In December 2019, the City of Toronto and Recreation Dept. planted the memorial tree for Bob Nagle, with funds raised by the club. The tree planted in Sunnybrook Park near the Pavilion, close to where Bob competed in numerous Ontario Masters cross country races. The remaining funds contributed went to the Warren Hoselton Tree Fund, in Bob's name, to plant trees on Toronto Island – a fitting memorial indeed.

For the record, Bob was honoured with several club awards, including Member of the Year (1997) and the Special Achievement Award (2000). He's taken his rightful place in the Longboat Hall of Fame.

By Tony Fletcher