

INDUCTEE PROFILE



Dave Patterson crosses the finish line to win the prestigious Philadelphia Marathon in 1981.

Marathon man

Dave Patterson separated himself from the pack

By Jim Lane
Altoona Mirror

By his own admission, Dave Patterson was a "late bloomer." A student-athlete at Altoona Area High School from 1966-69, Patterson was a wrestler first and then a distance runner in cross-country and track.

As a high school athlete, he didn't win any championships, although he did set the school's two-mile record as a senior.

"I had a pretty good career in high school," Patterson, now 62, said, "but nothing that would have led you to believe that I was going to have the career that I was fortunate to have."

He began to blossom as a runner at West Chester State College and, following his college days, he developed into one of the top marathon runners in the United States.

Patterson credits the late Angie Gioiosa, a former cross-country and track coach at Altoona High, for fueling his interest in running. Gioiosa was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2002.

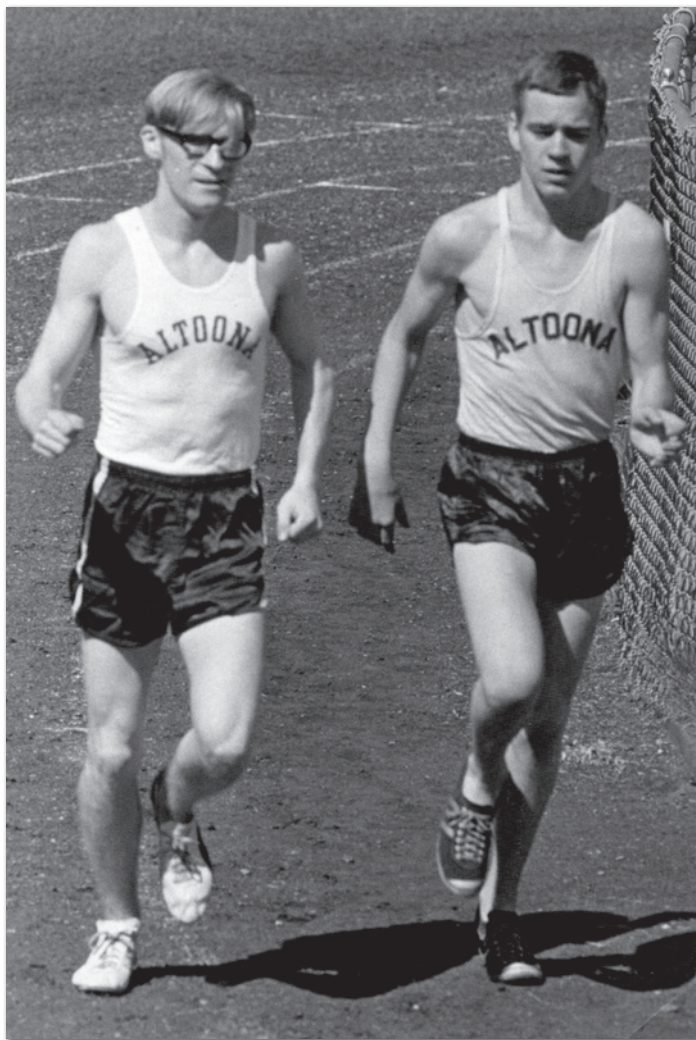
"Angie was my first real role model," Patterson said. "When I ran cross-country, he was the head coach, and he also was the distance coach in track. As a young athlete, what I respected most was that he would tell you what to do and then he ran right next to you, so I had a lot of respect for him right off the bat."

"When I got to college, some of my goals were what he had done as a runner at Slippery Rock," Patterson continued. "He was like the yardstick I based everything on."

Patterson also credits former Altoona High wrestling coach Marty Rusnak for motivating him as a young athlete.

"Other than Angie, Marty Rusnak had big impact on me from a motivational standpoint," Patterson said. "Marty had a way of getting you fired up and believing in yourself. That's one thing I've carried with me in life."

"When I did become a better athlete, I remembered that if things weren't going well, they'd eventually turn if I kept working and fighting. In



Dave (right) jogs in high school with teammate Doug Elway.

my case, it did after awhile."

Patterson won seven marathons during his career, including every major one in Philadelphia: the Penn Relays, Super Sunday, Bicentennial and Independence. He also won the Catalunya Marathon in Barcelona, Spain in 1978 and 1979. His final title was the Carolina Marathon in 1985.

Patterson's highlights included qualifying for the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in both 1980 and 1984 after just missing by less than a minute in 1976. His best finish came in 1980 when he placed 13th with a time of 2:15:08.

He ran 10 marathons under two hours and 20 minutes with his fastest at Boston in 1981 where he ran 2:14:18 and placed 19th. At the time, that performance placed Patterson 44th on the all-time U.S. Marathon list. He also finished in the top 25 at Boston in 1980 (2:20:27, 20th) and 1983 (2:15:20, 25th).

Patterson considers 1981 as the most consistent of his career when he ran five marathons and all but one of them was under 2:20.

In college, Patterson wanted to participate in multiple sports but soon realized it wasn't possible, so he concentrated on track and broke the school's three-mile record as a senior.

"I graduated with decent credentials as a runner, but nothing fabulous," he said. "There was always a lot of emphasis on meets — racing and resting — and I hadn't really developed. Once I was on my own, I started changing my training and doing a lot more distance work. I was racing less and training better, and I blossomed.

"I trained with other people, but I was self-coached. I did a lot of reading and became a big distance-training fan," he said. "I spent a great deal of time building my base to where I was running 120 miles some weeks."

Instead of focusing on track work, Patterson went the marathon direction. He eventually ran for Team Adidas, an international team, which paid him as a marathoner.

"After the second Olympic trials, I went out on my own," Patterson said. "I was a renegade."

Patterson also ran for Shore AC and currently runs in the masters category for the New Jersey-based team.

"I ran for them early on, and they introduced me to foreign running," he said. "They were responsible for me going to Spain and winning in Barcelona."

When asked what he feels were his biggest accomplishments, Patterson thought carefully before noting: "It comes down to three. One is the Olympic Trials in 1980 when I finished 13th. Another would be when I ran 2:14 at Boston and the other would be when I won the Philadelphia Marathon."

Although he's slowly moved away from his masters career, he's not closed the book on running.

"I've been running since I was 15 and I won't stop as long as I'm physically able to do it," he said.

Mike Patterson (no relation) and Dave were teammates at West Chester and have remained close friends since. Both ran for Team Adidas and still train together.

"We ran the two-mile indoor and the mile outdoor at West Chester," Mike Patterson said. "When we were out of college, we hooked up again. He got me into road races and made me a much better runner. We both ran at Boston several times."

Mike said Dave is a special runner.

"Dave always came up big in the big races," Mike said. "He always had the ability to push himself beyond limits. Plus, he's a great guy. There's no pretense about him."

Former Roosevelt Junior High principal Dick Gottshall,



Patterson bio

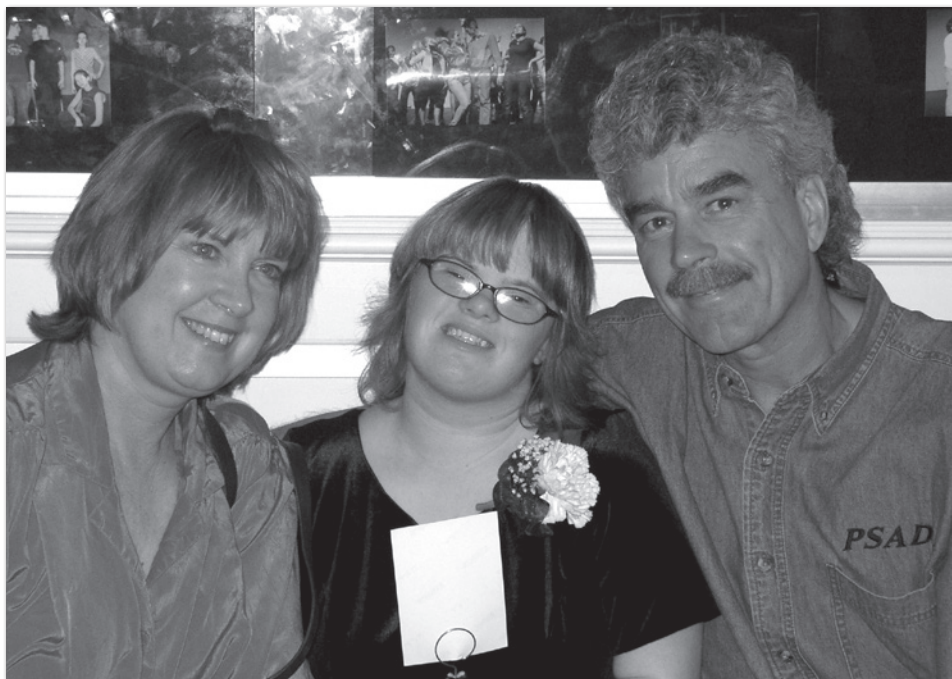
Sport: Running

High school: Altoona Area

College: West Chester

Hall of Fame achievement: Most accomplished distance runner in Blair County history has won seven national marathons and has three Top-25 finishes at Boston.

Current residence: Conshohocken, PA



Dave and his wife, Patty, are very active in the special-needs community. Their daughter, Jullian Hope, passed away from a blood clot at age 28 in August of 2012.

who now lives in New Hampshire, used to run with Patterson, whom he considers to be "without question" the most accomplished distance runner in Blair County history.

But, Gottshall said, "Dave was not only a great runner, he's a great human being."

Patterson and his wife, Patty, do a lot of work with people with special

needs. The Pattersons' special-needs daughter, Jullian Hope, passed away from a blood clot at age 28 in August of 2012.

Dave Patterson spent several years in the educational field as a coach and teacher. Most of his time was spent working in the Philadelphia area, and he spent the last 15 years of his career as athletic director and assistant principal at Pennsbury High School.

Patterson, who has two brothers in Altoona, credits his cousin, Tom Clapper, for leading him to college and his eventual career.

He is humbled by his induction to the Hall of Fame.

"It's nice to be recognized anywhere for what you've accomplished, but your hometown is your hometown," he said. "I got my foundation here. My formative years were spent in Altoona. I'm a product of a blue-collar, railroad family and a product of the Altoona school system, which provided excellent academics and athletics."



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