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Oklahoma City running coach dies at 83

BY BRYAN PAINTER

Published: December 2, 2008



On the day of the [Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon](#) in 2005, Jack E. Rector of Oklahoma City was asked by a reporter from *The Oklahoman* about the volunteer training program he and his wife [Sherrri](#) conducted for marathon runners.



Jack Rector, with his wife Sherrri, holds his medal from running in the Paris Marathon in this April 21, 2004, file photo by Nate Billings.

His response was indicative of his commitment to helping others.

"This morning, I always stay until the last runner comes in," he said.

"I had people coming up and saying, 'I wouldn't have been able to do this without group training.' That's my reward."

[Jack Rector](#) died Friday in Oklahoma City. He was 83 years old. Services are scheduled for 1 p.m. Thursday in the chapel at the Church of the Servant, 14343 N MacArthur Blvd.

"The thing about Jack was he lived a life of joy and he wanted to share that with other people," said [Thomas Hill](#), president and co-founder of the annual Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon.

"One way he did that was by introducing people to running. People loved to run with Jack. He was a great encourager and a fantastic coach."

A love of running

Rector, a strong supporter of the Oklahoma City Running Club, was a competitive runner for 48 years. He not only ran marathons throughout the [United States](#), but also internationally, including a marathon in Paris.

Again, it was the training program that exemplified how much he desired to share his love of running.

The build-up training program for runners started in November 2000 in preparation

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The build-up training program for runners started in November 2000 in preparation for the inaugural Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon in 2001.

The first year, Rector received about 30 inquiries via e-mail and had about 12 runners show up at the group runs. In 2004, the number of requests to be included on the e-mail training list was up to 165. As many as 65 runners participated in group runs.

However, by 2005, at least 255 e-mail requests came in. The lowest number of runners at a group run was 75. He and Sherri also led training for the 2006 marathon, with about 500 people on the e-mail list and more than 200 people at several of the group runs.

The World War II veteran who worked for [Oklahoma Gas and Electric Co.](#) for 30 years also held numerous positions in business and civic groups.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, [Jo Lou Douglass](#) Rector.

He is survived by his wife Sherri Rector; daughter [Lisa Rector Berry](#) and her husband Bill; grandchildren Josh and [Kristal Berry](#); daughter [Lynn Rector](#); and stepsons Don and Corey Jameson.

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