

Tennessee with a total of 5,600 members. The Murfreesboro Pacers and the Murfreesboro Half Marathon are among them.

In the late 1950s, jogging for health and fitness was practically unheard of and there were very few distance racing events in the United States. The Long Distance Log, publication with a circulation of 126 readers, was the chief means of communication with distance runners. In the August 1957 issue of the Long Distance Log an editorial by Olympian Browning Ross proposed developing an organization for American distance runners. The concept was modeled after the Road Runners Club of the UK, which was founded in 1952. He suggested that membership include not only runners, but also officials, race sponsors, coaches and more. Ross envisioned the group would encourage running, meet regularly, raise funds, coordinate schedules, recruit sponsors and promote competition in long-distance races.

Response to the concept was positive; meetings were held in December 1957 and shortly thereafter, the Middle Atlantic Road Runners Club was established. And on February 22, 1958, the Road Runners Club of America was born.

Meeting at the Paramount Hotel in New York City, Ross and nine others discussed the general direction for the organization and developed the basic operating structure. Ross was named acting provisional president. The first RRCA National Championship races were awarded, and events were held in Chicago, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

Interest in the RRCA increased and by April 1958, the New York Road Runners Club, now the New York Road Runners, was established with 29 members. In February 1959, the Michigan Road Runners Club was established in Detroit by Hugh Jascourt and Frank McBride. Several months later, the RRCA held an annual meeting at the Paramount Hotel in New York City. The group elected president Dick Donohue, treasurer Steve Thomas, and co-secretaries Tom Osler and Browning Ross. They served as the first officially elected officers of the RRCA.

At the 1960 annual meeting Ted Corbitt was elected president. "Those were tough days, days of survival [for the RRCA]", Corbitt wrote. "Instead of recognizing the good work the RRCA was doing to promote distance running, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) refused to admit the RRCA as a member club and took the position that the RRCA was illegal." In those days, the AAU was the ruling body of sport; they advised the RRCA to function solely as a social or fraternal group and not conduct races.

The early 1960s saw the development of new running clubs around the country. By the end of the RRCA's third year, its members had hosted over 600 races around the country compared to the previous handful of races.

Over the years, the RRCA has been credited with developing course certification programs, establishing the first events for recreational joggers, removing age requirements for racing, encouraging competitive opportunities for women, creating a Hall of Fame for distance runners, and obtaining insurance and IRS tax-exempt status for member clubs.

Many important publications have been developed by the RRCA including fact sheets on cold and hot weather running, safety for runners, guidelines for buying a pair of running

shoes, tips for helping children start running and many more.

By the 1980s, RRCA membership included 400 clubs and elected its first woman president, Henley "Gibble" Gabeau. The first edition of the RRCA Children's Running Booklet and the Parent & Teacher's Curriculum authored by Don Kardong, an Olympic marathoner and future RRCA president, and Jim Ferstle were circulated to thousands for clubs, teachers, schools and more.

More recently the RRCA has developed a coaching certification program, as well as the Roads Scholar Program to support aspiring international caliber American distance runners. In 1997, the RRCA gave a grant through the new Roads Scholar Program to Deena Drossin (Kastor), a young distance runner who went on to win the bronze medal in the 2004 Athens Olympic marathon.

Over the last 50 years, the RRCA has stayed true to its mission. The future of long-distance running and the RRCA's impact on the sport will continue to be written for years to come.

CONGRATULATING THE YMCA OF
MICHIANA ON ITS 125TH ANNI-
VERSARY

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, today I wish to congratulate the YMCA of Michiana. On March 19, 2008 the Michiana YMCA will celebrate 125 years of steadfast dedication to building strong individuals, families and communities.

The YMCA was launched in 1882 back when Clement Studebaker was president of the Studebaker Company and local resident Schuyler Colfax was the Vice-President of the United States. In order to celebrate Studebaker's 50 years of success in the community and in business, the Studebaker Company established the YMCA, beginning a proud tradition of service. Sports programs flourished over the coming decades. Famed Notre Dame coach Knute Rockne even taught football during the summer at the Michiana YMCA affiliate Camp Eberhart.

Michiana was blessed with an especially successful YMCA. During the 1950s it developed the nation's largest Indian Guide program and started the Indian Maiden program. An impressive tennis program was also developed that rivaled the nation's best. During the 1960s, two newer facilities were built, a more family oriented approach was pursued to encourage both girls and boys to participate and the Urban Youth Services Program was started. Today the YMCA offers physical fitness activities, aquatics, youth and adult sports leagues and many other programs that improve the lives of people of all ages.

These are exciting times for the YMCA as a new three-year Strategic Plan is being implemented. The Michiana community has benefited from the positive influence of the YMCA on the community for over a century. Today I salute the Michiana YMCA and wish them continued success.

DR. VIDA DAVOUDI—CHANGING
THE WORLD ONE STUDENT AT A
TIME

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, today I have the privilege to recognize Dr. Vida Davoudi of Kingwood, TX. Her life as an Iranian immigrant turned proud American citizen is an inspirational tale of not only living the American Dream but of someone who diligently works daily to improve it for others.

Her journey to success in America began early. With encouragement from her parents, they told her to dream big and that the key to great achievement was to obtain an education. While in high school, Davoudi became a foreign exchange student to the United States through the American Field Service Program as well as a sponsorship from a Rotary Club. For one year, she lived with an American family and fell in love with the democratic political system of the United States.

After returning to Iran to graduate from high school, Dr. Davoudi participated in a competitive exam conducted by American International Development and was awarded a four-year, full scholarship to attend American University of Beirut. Continuing her journey of academic excellence, she returned to the United States to attend graduate school at Southern Illinois University.

After Dr. Davoudi earned her masters and doctorate degrees in political science, she returned to her country and ran for a seat in the Iranian Parliament. Davoudi won and become the youngest member ever elected. She served for three years in the national assembly representing the city of Tehran and championed issues such as the abolition of polygamy and divorce law reform. She left Iran for the United States shortly before the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979.

When Dr. Davoudi arrived in the United States, the only things she brought with her were a suitcase, her nine-year-old son and her education. Davoudi credits her education as the key ingredient to her success.

"Education was the only thing that enabled us to survive," she said. "I have no doubt that education is the key to opening doors and improving lives financially and intellectually."

She was hired as a government professor at Kingwood College in 1989 and has used the opportunity to impact the lives of numerous young people.

For example, a recently divorced student approached Davoudi one day in tears. The young woman told her that she was having great difficulty coping with her divorce and wanted to drop her class. Davoudi told the woman that she would not let her withdraw, but instead would provide her with flexibility and whatever she needed in order to complete the course. The young lady successfully finished Davoudi's class and eventually became a practicing nurse. Years later, she was very thankful to Davoudi for not letting her quit during a difficult time in her life.

Davoudi is also the faculty sponsor for the college's Student Government Association. She fosters leadership development in her students by actively encouraging them every year to seek state-level positions in the organization. Through her diligent efforts and advice,