

Robert Hunter

Personal Contributor/Running

When you have a bunch of blue lights trailing you, many times that can never be a good sign. However, in Robert Hunter's case, it's fine... even welcomed. The police officers offer an escort to help Robert measure the running courses in Memphis accurately.

Robert moved to Memphis in the early 1970s after graduating from Mississippi State and got into the Bluff City sports scene playing slow-pitch softball. But in 1992, a work friend — who was also the president of the Memphis Runners Track Club — invited him to join the group in area races from 5K to longer charity runs. Robert was hooked. He ran in more than 300 races, including 14 marathons, but knee surgeries shortened his running career.

Robert, though, didn't want his association with distance running to end, so he found another avenue to be involved — as a volunteer. He served as a Ride Leader for the Memphis Hightailers Bicycle Club and as president of the Memphis Runners Track Club for two years.

It was then in the late 1990s that Robert began combining his technical expertise in engineering — he worked as a civil engineer for MLGW for 33 years — with his running experience to accurately measure running courses throughout Memphis. Prior to Rob's involvement, courses in Memphis were only approximations. Since 1999, Rob has been the primary course measurer in certifying and re-certifying courses ranging from 1 mile to the standard 26-mile marathon, including Memphis' St. Jude Marathon

Precise course certification is needed for runners as they qualify for other races around the country, including the prestigious Boston Marathon. Course certification is also required for runners to qualify for U.S. Olympic Trials and set age group records.

Additionally, Robert's love of running led him and his wife, Sara, to enter Memphis into the Road Runners Club of America's Runner Friendly Community competition. Their efforts produced a video highlighting the Memphis running community and featured letters of support from the Memphis mayor and St. Jude. Because of his work, Memphis received a Runner Friendly Community designation that it continues to enjoy.

Robert has been the race director for many Memphis Runners Track Club events and has also maintained the equipment the organization uses to ensure the smooth operation of its races.

Please welcome to the Hall of Fame, as a personal contributor for running — Robert Hunter.