

## **DAVID CARR**

*In his recently published book, VMA member Mike Hall paid this tribute to David Carr on his athletics achievements over the years.*

In the sport of Masters Athletics there are few greater examples than Western Australian middle distance ace, David Carr, who epitomises our philosophy "age shall prove no barrier in the pursuit of excellence". Having recently advanced to a new M80 division, he has clearly established himself on the world scene consistently rewriting the world record books over the last two years.

After leaving school at seventeen, David joined the Royal Australian Navy for a period of eight years before venturing on a teaching career, eventually becoming a school principal. During this time he met and married Patricia and they now have three children and five grandchildren. However, the love of athletics inevitably stirred their competitive instincts to the point that saw him become a major influence in the formation of the West Australian Veterans Association in 1974, and publishing/editing the club's first newsletter in July that year.

This then heralded a remarkable forty years of consistent achievement at the highest level of world Veterans/Masters Athletics that has seen him amass no fewer than sixteen world records and almost fifty national records, of which twenty-three are still current! His renowned determination and dedication to his strict training routine has ensured advancing age has in no way become any form of barrier in his personal "pursuit of excellence".

A clear indication of this has been the virtual total domination of his favourite events at world and national level, establishing no fewer than fourteen new records since advancing to the M80 division, in June 2012. Included in this was no greater example of this remarkable athlete's ability to continually extend himself, when after setting a new world record in the 2000 steeplechase 9.39.3 he then lowered it on three occasions during the following six months to 9.35.1.

Now having competed in ten World Championships since 1987, David has accumulated a total of twenty four medals and at national level almost one hundred.

To further illustrate his complete dominance in his current age category, at the highest level of competition, he captured gold medal honours at the 2013 World Masters track and field Championships in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in all four of his events 400/800/1500 and 2000 steeplechase!

His wealth of achievements in middle-distance events have been well rewarded over many years, which include six individual Australian Masters awards, many West Australian awards and the distinction of winning the prestigious *John Gilmour Trophy* for the best individual performance annually in Western Australia, on seven occasions since 1997.

David's long and total involvement in the sport he loves, athletics as a competitor, official, coach and convenor of several successful Masters state and national Championships over many years, resulted in him being inducted as a Life Member of Athletics Western Australia.

However, despite his renowned competitive spirit and determination to succeed, his modest manner and quiet disposition belies his willingness to offer advice and encouragement to others whenever it is needed. This amazing athlete, who refuses to slow down, is indeed a great ambassador for the Masters athletics.

## Biography of the Nominee (including both sporting and personal history)

DAVID CARR, born in Harvey (WA) to a family of no sporting note and educated at many schools in that state, developed an interest in athletics as a teenager.

Olympian (walker) Don Keane encouraged him to join Old Haliens Athletics Club and compete at Leederville Oval. He was unplaced for two seasons.

Six years in the navy provided an opportunity to run with Albatross Athletic Club, which competed in B grade at Sydney's E.S. Marks track, again unplaced but earning a few points for the club. More importantly, under Frank McCaffery's guidance, that club had a strong cross-country programme and a mid-week track and field competition. David competed in inter-service meetings, this time earning places. He could run 53.5 for 400m.

He had played junior baseball and after the navy years re-joined Perth baseball club, was captain-coach of B grade and a handy base-runner.

At age twenty-six and selling sporting goods at Boans (Myers) and engaged to Patricia, it was time to get serious. David entered Claremont Teachers College, qualified and started a long career with the WA Education Department. He was the college 400 champion, but most of the sporting passion went into the baseball.

As a teacher he went off to the bush (actually it was beautiful Denmark on the south coast), taught, studied for a degree and fathered three wonderful children. He ran on the beach for fitness.

Five years later the young family went to Nauru, Central Pacific. It was the wealthiest country (pro-rata) in the world about then so there were no taxes, rent or services to worry about. David helped out at the athletic club. Robbie-Morgan Morris was the driving force.

Then it was back to Perth, until another opportunity arose and the family went to Goroka, Papua-New Guinea on a two-year contract. David was the President of the Eastern Highland Athletic Association.

Seemingly too old for athletics, he responded enthusiastically when Masters athletics started in Australia. He was a founding member of WA Veterans Athletic Club (Masters WA), and later president, convenor of Australian Championships and Life Member. He has served many years on club committees. For several years he organized the state championships. As an athlete he ran from 100m (12 seconds) to marathons (2:57), threw and jumped. This was life at last: Athletic Association, Marathon Club, Vets, professional handicaps, interstate championships and world championships. A runner's life.

Amazingly, he found he could hold on to the times of his youth. At age fifty-five he could run under 2:10 for 800m, two seconds slower than his best.

Promotions in his profession took the family to several country towns. Whilst Principal at Northcliffe, he started a small athletic club. At Kulin, in the wheat belt, David and Patricia marked out a 300 metre track on the football ground for training. They would travel to Perth for some runs with the club, and for state championships. As Deputy Principal in Harvey he could run with nearby Bunbury Athletic Club. At that stage, David was living in the street in which his family lived when he was born.

Then it was back to the city for good, as Deputy and then Acting Principal of Cannington Senior High school, a fitting location as Coker Park athletic facility was actually on the school grounds. He could still manage second place in the school fun-run. Anyone working in schools has the opportunity to facilitate and encourage sport; that is part of many teachers' service to the students.

For the last twenty years David has been an official with Athletics WA and served on related committees. He is a Life Member.

There is no secret training programme. Just solid aerobic background, gym work, weekly interval session and some competition. Solid basic stuff, and consistency.

It is a big help to have family members who share the interest and understand the single-minded (selfish?) effort required in elite sport. Patricia has earned many championships. Australian and World, as a jumper and sprinter. Between them the three children have been through Little Athletics, run a marathon and won the Perth City to Surf.

Is the passion still there? He is preparing daily, for Lahti.

Other Outstanding Masters Performances (e.g. at Open Athletics championships, other national Masters Championships etc.)

Marathons

About 8 run.

Best performance      M50                      2hr 55:08      1983                      Perth

AMA Awards

Most outstanding individual performance      2001

Most outstanding male athlete                      2003

Middle distance award                                      2007

Brian Foley Trophy for best age-graded performance at AMA National Championships      2008-10-28

West Australian Masters Awards

Point score trophy for track and field:

1980, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008.

John Gilmour trophy for best performance

1997/8, 1998/9, 1999/2000, 2001/0, 2002/3, 2003/4, 2007/8

Anne Shaw trophy for athlete of meet, WA Championships

1993, 1998, 2008

Distance running handicap award

2007/8