

LYNETTE VENTRIS

Lyn was born in Cottesloe 2nd October 1956 to parents Jim and Verna Howell and is the eldest of three girls

Lyn's schooling was at various schools with her Dad being in the railways they were transferred on a number of occasions.

Lyn started school at North Kalgoorlie Primary School and finished her primary years at Bicton Primary School.

Lyn commenced and finished high school at John Curtin Senior High School in Fremantle with some secondary schooling in between at Cunderdin Senior High School and Merredin Senior High School.

Lyn's working life began at the National Bank in Cottesloe and as it was a fair trek from home she jumped at the chance being offered a position at the R&I Bank (now Bankwest) in Kwinana. When she met John (her future husband) she transferred to the R&I Bank in Merredin.

Lyn married John in 1978 and lived in Merredin. Lyn and John have two children Michelle and Greg and three grand children.

Once married, Lyn's working life continued in small business in the media (radio and newspapers) in the 70s, 80s and 90s. During the 90s Lyn took twelve months out to work in the Special Education unit at Northam Senior High School as a teacher's aide. For the past twenty years has been involved in the hospitality industry with her husband John.

On a voluntary basis Lyn has served on Catholic School Boards and has just taken up a position on the South West Academy of Sport (SWAS) board in Bunbury. Lyn has also been involved in mentoring with a school based mentoring program. Lyn was instrumental in obtaining the first government funded child care centre in Merredin (Cooinda Child Care Centre). Overseeing the project from the planning stages, to seeing the building finished and employing the staff. When opportunities rise Lyn makes herself available to coach junior athletes on race walking techniques.

Before Lyn became involved in athletics she enjoyed playing tennis, was an A Grade squash player and in her younger days was involved in horse riding and sailing.

Outside of sport Lyn is a keen birdwatcher and also enjoys photography, art, gardening and mastering the Italian language.

Info by Richard Blurton

Lyn Ventris has emerged as one of the greatest Masters Athletes still competing in open competition and consistently being an outright winner across all age groups in world masters competitions.

Lyn always kept fit and healthy 'doing something'. She was an 'A' Grade squash player and also played tennis but 'fitness' walking was always prominent in her fitness regimen. Eventually gym sessions were introduced working on the theory that the legs were getting a work out but the upper body could do with more, that was 23 years ago and Lyn religiously trains in the gym 3 or 4 times a week.

It was not until a friend introduced Lyn to 'official' athletics race walking that she became keen on the sport in 1996 and with the Masters National Athletics Championships in Perth that year (1996) it was an ideal goal to aim for.

In that event Lyn won her age group (W35) in both races. It wasn't until Lyn competed in the World Masters Athletics Championships at Gateshead in England (1999) coming third in the 5000 metre track walk and fifth in the 10k road walk and being beaten by two USA athletes that really spurred her on to getting a coach and getting serious.

Two years later in 2001 at the World Masters Athletics Championships in Brisbane Lyn not only beat the Americans but won both events (5000 metres and 10Km) outright beating all other age groups.

Lyn has since competed at further World Masters Athletics Championships in New Zealand at the World Masters Non-Stadia World Championships 2004 (winning the 10k Road Walk and 20k Road Walk, setting a world record in the 20k and winning 10k and 20k Road Walk Team Gold medals) San Sebastian-Spain 2005, (winning all events outright and a 10k Road Walk Team Bronze medal), Riccione-Italy 2007(silver medal in the 20k Road Walk and 20k Walk Team Gold for Australia), Lahti-Finland 2009 (winning all events outright and bringing home four gold medals, including a 20k Road Walk Team Gold), Sacramento USA 2011 (winning gold in all 3 of her events outright, setting as new world record and also taking home 2 team gold medals for Australia. Jyvaskyla – Finland World Masters Indoor Championships (winning both of her events outright and setting 2 world records and a 10k Road Walk team bronze medal) Lyon 2015 (winning all three events and a 10k Road Walk team Silver and 20k Road Walk team Gold).

The times Lyn did in Brisbane in 2001 opened the door even further to enable her to compete against athletes more than half her age in open race walking events.

Lyn decided to start competing at the WA State Open Athletics Championships and has won the 5000metre and 10000metre Open track walks over many years. Lyn has also won the State Open Championship 20Km road walk a number of times.

Lyn also holds the WA State Open records for the 10000metre track walk and 20k road walk.

Lyn believes Masters Athletics is a great way to prove that life doesn't stop at 30,40 or 50 as far as being competitive. Even though she has taken her race-walking to another level through Masters Athletics, it is important to her to get the message across to others that participation is the key and is very proud to showcase Masters Athletics through her sport of race-walking. Lyn is willing to help anyone that would like to focus on improving their health through a sensible diet and exercise program."

A FEW OTHER POINTS:

After competing at Gateshead in 1999, Lyn decided she needed a coach and initially had a coach in Perth before moving to Mark Donahoo and then received good advice from Andrew Jamieson and Simon Baker and is now again being coached by Mark. Recently Lyn has been writing her own training programs but still running all her ideas past Mark before the final program is decided upon.

Lyn finds it particularly difficult at times with coaching advice in Melbourne and training on her own in Bunbury two hours south of Perth. With a lack of any competitions locally and not being able to get to Perth for many regular events consequently it is the major championships that turns out to be the events to be competing in.

Lyn trains on courses mapped out around her home suburb of Australind. Bunbury also now has an IAAF standard athletics track which has made a huge difference to training and competing.

A typical training week could include:

Monday -	Race Walking Long Distance Speed session and Gym
Tuesday -	Race Walking Distance Session (fast)
Wednesday -	Race Walking Short Distance Speed Session and Gym
Thursday -	Session on Road Bike or Rest
Friday -	10k Hill Run and Gym
Saturday -	Race Walking Long Distance Steady Session
Sunday -	Rest

Winning any event at the World Masters Athletics championships are highlights but a 10km road walk in 47.25 at Chipping Norton in Sydney at Easter in 2001 was memorable because Lyn felt so good and it didn't even feel as if she had competed.

Lyn's 10000m on the track when third to Jane and Natalie Saville to record her best time of 46.35 in 2002 was also memorable and being first across the line in the England 20km Open road walk championships in 2005 at Earls Colne in Essex was also one to remember.

Other highlights (after struggling for about 12months) were competing at the Australian Masters Athletics 20k Championships in May 2012 and breaking her previously held world record by over 5 minutes. The reason behind her success was a tweak in training regime. Changes included adding in extra recovery days, a change in diet and using Bunbury's new athletics track.

For Lyn being selected as the IAAF Female Masters Athlete of the Year 2011 and again in 2012 was without a doubt the biggest honour! It is one of those awards that is up there and would be a nice achievement but to be actually nominated and finally selected not once but twice was a very humbling experience and something Lyn will treasure for many years to come!

However, with highlights sometimes come lowlights! After struggling with hamstring problems for over three years and exhausting all forms of treatment with no success the only solution was surgery to re-attach a partially torn and much damaged hamstring tendon. The surgery in November 2013 was tough and the rehabilitation tough and frustrating. It took twelve months of intense work with physios to finally get back into training. Lyn is back into serious training and has major competitions in her sights. With renewed energy, vigour and dogged determination anything is possible.

Outside of competing and training Lyn is a successful business woman owning and operating Café Bean in Bunbury with her husband John for the past 20 years.

Lyn is often asked to speak at various events and clubs and organizations on motivation and training and is a keen advocate on promoting race-walking, masters' athletics and general health, fitness and wellbeing.

Lyn occasionally takes coaching clinics helping Little Athletics Athletes to learn and understand race-walking techniques and rules with a focus on good sportsmanship and will often travel to areas where services and advice are limited to give younger athletes every opportunity to perform well alongside their city counterparts.

With her knowledge and current experience as an athlete and business person Lyn was recently invited to sit on the Southwest Academy of Sport (SWAS) board. Previous to this Lyn was part of an interview panel to assess young athletes applying for SWAS scholarships.