

Biography of Shirley Brasher

Shirley Brasher 6.11.26 – 12.7.09

Shirley Brasher was born in Campbell Town, Tasmania on 06/11/26. She grew up on a small farm in rural Tasmania and attended school until the age of 14 and her love of athletics was apparent even then! Although she was eligible to leave school in December 1940, Shirley chose to stay on at school until the following April so that she could compete in the Anzac Day sports. This was her only opportunity to participate in athletics events in the small town. Shirley worked on the family farm and later, briefly at Cadbury's factory in Hobart until she married at the age of 30.

Over the next 6 years Shirley had four children and running a household, a farm and raising her small children was a full time occupation. In 1968 the family moved to Launceston and her children became involved in athletics. Shirley was not happy for the small boys to train alone on the streets of Launceston and so began running with them. This encouraged her to enter regular senior competition at the age of 42 years.

Early in 1971 Shirley separated from her husband, becoming a single parent. Finding work proved difficult and Shirley was forced to lie about her age to secure work in a local factory. She continued with factory work until her retirement at age 60 in 1986. She welcomed the opportunity to devote more time to athletics.

In her 40's Shirley won medals in 800m and 1500m events at the Tasmanian Open Athletics Championships every year from 1970 till 1976. In 1978 Shirley discovered Veteran Athletics. She travelled to Melbourne to compete in her first Australian Championship, winning six events in the 50-55 age group. In Sydney the following year she won the combined 1500m event, defeating competitors in all younger age groups.

In 1979 Shirley competed in her first World Veteran Athletics Championships, winning three silver and one bronze medal. She was a medallist in every World Veteran Athletics Championships, including her final international event in Riccione, Italy in 2007, in the 80-85 age group. Over 30 years of competition in Veteran/Masters Athletics Shirley won medals at Australian, Oceania and World Championships in events ranging from 400m to the marathon. In recent years she also successfully

competed in field events and pentathlons. Her medal winning performances are too numerous to mention individually. In World Championships alone she won 23 individual gold, 20 silver and 11 bronze medals as well as 2 gold and 1 silver medal in teams events. She broke 15 world and 22 Australian records in various age groups.

Shirley was honoured with Tasmanian and Australian Sports Awards and was chosen as flag bearer for the World Masters Athletics Championships in the opening ceremony in Japan in 1993. In later years she devoted numerous hours volunteering as an official at athletics events ranging from school carnivals to national competitions.

Shirley passed away in July 2009, just weeks before she was due to compete in the World Masters Athletics Championships in Lahti, Finland.

Provided by Shirley Brasher's daughter, Colleen Walker

Shirley Brasher 6.11.1926 - 12.7.2009

Sporting Awards

Outstanding Female Athlete - 1979

Australian Veteran Athletic Titles – Sydney NSW

Outstanding Female Athlete – 1982

Australian Veteran Athletics Titles – Perth WA

Female Athlete of the year *- Sport Australia Award 1982

Awarded by Confederation of Australian Sport

in recognition of outstanding commitment to athletics as a competitor and official and as a role model for older Australians

Most outstanding sporting achievement within Australia*- Sport Australia Award

Awarded by Confederation of Australian Sport

Best single Sporting Performance*- 1989- Sport Australia Award

Awarded by Confederation of Australian Sport

Tasmanian Sportswoman of the year* – 1988

Awarded by Sportswomen's Association of Australia, Tasmanian Division

in recognition of outstanding personal performances

Sport Achievement Award* – 1987, 1988 and 1989

Awarded by Commonwealth of Australia

in recognition of outstanding commitment to athletics as a competitor and official and

as a role model for older Australians

Senior Athlete of the year 1988/89

Awarded by Newstead Harrier Club (Launceston, Tasmania)

Senior Athlete of the year 1991/92

Awarded by Northern Branch, Athletics Tasmania

Athlete of the Year – 1991/92 and 1992/93

Awarded by Veteran Athletics Tasmania

Flag Bearer of the WAVA Flag – Opening Ceremony 1993 – Japan

Awarded by World Veteran Athletics Association

Flag Bearer AAVAC Flag – Durban, South Africa 1997

(See enclosed photograph)

Australian Sports Medal – 2000*

Awarded by Commonwealth of Australia

in recognition of Australian sporting achievement

Life Member Tasmanian Masters Athletics – 2005

Australian Masters Athletics Hall of Fame – 2010

Awarded posthumously in April 2010 (only the fourth inductee to this

prestigious honour roll)

Shirley Brasher crosses the finish line in the Burnie 10, in October 2004. One of the

oldest competitors, Shirley won the Women's Veteran Category in 1984.