

I decided to try to attempt to run in five. I set my goal to win all of them, and to win them in record time. All of these were between 300 and 1,100 miles in length. And some of them were as close as just five days apart. I ended up winning four in record time and coming in a close second in the fifth. So I didn't reach my ultimate goal, but by challenging myself like that I was able to set four new world records. I try to examine each race that I run, even the ones that I have won, to see what little steps I can take to keep getting better.

Let me speak now of failure, because I have had very many of them and each one of you will. It's how you deal with these failures and your setbacks that's the most important thing. In 1991, I was at the top of my game. My team was said to be the best team in the history of the Iditarod that year. I ran a very aggressive race. Mother Nature threw every curve at me and my team that she possibly could. For over 500 miles, me and my team broke trail through storms, leading all the other mushers, until we finally reached the village of White Mountain an hour in front of our next competitor. We were only 77 miles from Nome. The awesome power of nature is very humbling and it must be respected. I went out first into an Arctic blizzard for six hours, losing the trail, regaining the trail, searching to make it through to Nome and win another race, until finally I knew that I could ask my team for no more. Because I continually challenge myself to win, I know that sometimes I must fail. As I tried to become the best, I know that there will be setbacks along the way. This is the essence of competition—that there will be both winners and losers. But I have learned at looking at losing, it's just another step to attaining my final goal. Many times, the pain of failure is very raw for me. But I have great faith in myself, that I will turn my defeats into something positive. I have learned many valuable lessons from my defeats. But I think the best thing was summed up in the words of an old Athabaskan Indian. He told me, "There are many hard things in life, but there is only one sad thing. And that is giving up." So I know that in the future, I will continue to try very hard, and in the end—I will prevail.

Adversity is a very large part of life, and learning to overcome it can be very difficult. When I started racing, I believed that I would win when I made everything run perfectly, when I was able to train all year round, when I didn't get lost or break my sled. So when I would have trouble, I wouldn't completely give up, but I would often settle for second place. Now I know that winning is overcoming adversity. I don't win because I run a perfect race. I win because I deal with the problems that the dogs and I encounter better than my fellow competitors.

I have actually learned to love adversity. In 1988, I had every type of trouble that you could ask for. My sled broke five times. I got lost and I ran into ground storms of 80 miles an hour as I crossed the frozen Bering Sea. I could hardly see my lead dog in front of me, let alone the next trail marker. But I won the race despite all the problems the dogs and I encountered. We finished fourteen hours in front of the second place musher, who couldn't make it through the storm. So I learned that no matter what the obstacles, I always had the chance of winning and should never give up.

It is true that I raced in a totally male-dominated sport. I was a pioneer for women in long-distance racing. But you won't hear me talking very much about that. I think the most important thing was that I saw no gender barriers. And anyone who tried to put me in that box and say, "well, Susan is the

best woman racer," I would quickly correct them. I was not a woman racer, I was a racer. It was my plan to be the best musher, and I did that.

Perhaps I have been able to say something here today that will strike a chord with each of you, or some of you. Many of my lessons have been learned from my heroes—my dogs. I'd like to share the story of one of my animals. Twenty years ago, I had a puppy born to my kennel, who didn't look like he was going to be much of a dog. He had a very poor hair coat. He had cowhocked legs, which is basically knock-knees in the back end, and he had no confidence whatsoever. Most mushers would have given up on this puppy and just sold him to someone as a pet dog. But on my runs in the woods with he and his littermates, I saw a special spark in this dog that was not yet ignited. It was a challenge that I couldn't resist to try and make him into a champion sled dog. So I worked with him very hard physically to bring him around, through special nutrition and training. But mostly I concentrated on his lack of confidence. I gave him a strong name—Granite. He soon learned to draw from my strength and confidence, and we became a very powerful team. Granite grew into a 58-pound, deep-chested dog who compensated for his cow-hocked legs with a very powerful gait. All that extra work paid off because he not only turned into a good sled dog, but a great leader. He ended up leading me to victory in the 1986 and 1987 Iditarods, both of those in record time, along with countless other races between 300-500 miles in length. In October of 1987 while we were training for what we hoped would be his third consecutive victory, he became very seriously ill. I had to rush him down to Anchorage to a veterinary hospital to try and save his life. We set up a cot next to his kennel so that I could sleep with him there, day and night, tending him and willing him to live. After two weeks, the veterinarians told me I could take him home, but that he was never going to be able to run again, that he had permanent damage to his heart and liver and kidneys along with damage to the hypothalamus in the brain, which controls body temperature. But Granite had grown to be a magnificent canine athlete who loved to run and race, and all the dogs loved competition. They understand when they have won. They have as much pride as any human athlete. Granite was determined to get back on the team. Every time I would take other dogs out on runs, he would cry and howl, wishing that he could go out with us. Slowly but surely, his test results started showing improvements that the veterinarians were astounded at. They decided to let him start training with me and the puppies on little 2-mile runs. He soon advanced to running with the yearlings on 10-mile runs. And finally, by January, he was once again running with the main team, and the veterinarians okayed him for a 200-mile race. He towed that young team to record-setting victory. Then, 1½ months later he went on to do the impossible. He led me to victory in the Iditarod. And he did it by pulling me through a blinding snow storm that stopped all my competitors. So we finished 14 hours in front of the second place musher, as I told you—through that storm. That made Granite the only lead dog ever to win three consecutive Iditarods.

All of us will fall on hard times, and it's often hard to find the key to help us with our problems. But if we can draw from our inner strength and desires as Granite did, we can overcome incredible odds. It's always important to look around us and see that there are those whose problems are far greater than ours. It's important to take time to give back to your community, to youth, and to those less privileged. As I am now a mother

and a dog sled racer, I have taken more time to contemplate my past Iditarod years. So I want to leave you with one last story that sort of sums up what I think of my career.

I always felt that there was a division of duties between myself and the dogs. The dogs were definitely better in the wilderness, such as being able to sense thin ice or where there were wild animals around us, and helping me through the storms. But I was better when we were in Anchorage starting out and there were cars and traffic lights and all sorts of things in any of the villages, and I was also better at strategy and understanding competition. In 1989 I was racing towards the half-way point in the Iditarod. They give you a prize of \$5,000 for being the first into that checkpoint, and nothing for being second, so it's quite coveted. Joe Runyon and myself were the best two teams in the race that year, and we had been vying for first place for miles. We had just left the checkpoint of Ophir, and it was about a 90-mile run over to the abandoned gold mine town of Iditarod. Throughout the day, Joe and I had passed each other. You have got to imagine that these are just two mushers out in the middle of nowhere, so when you pass each other—even though you're very competitive with each other—you definitely talk. And when you see each other and pass, you will have a little conversation. So just as it was getting dusk, I had put on my headlight so that I could see through the darkness—a battery-powered headlight, as had Joe—he put his new young lead dog, Rambo, up in lead. He came flying by me. He stopped—I had out my map and compass. He said, "Where do you think we are?" I said, "I think we have just passed the Deshka River. Here it is on the map, so we must be about five miles from the town of Iditarod." He said, "That's what I'm thinking too," and he passed me. I was using my lead dog, Tolstoy, at the time. I started pumping with one leg and encouraging my dogs, saying "Come on, let's get going." They just were flat. They were not going to pick up and go as fast as Joe's team. So I took Granite, who was in the team, and I put him up in lead. I encouraged him, and I encouraged the rest of the team. Still, they didn't respond. Five miles should have taken us about thirty minutes. We went hour after hour after hour. Three hours later, we were still on the trail. I could see Joe's headlight—it's very hilly country there—going up and down the hills, just a little ways ahead of me. All of a sudden, Granite turned around and he looked at me and he went, "Now!" And he kicked it into gear, all the dogs immediately responded to him, and he passed Joe 100 yards from the finish line at Iditarod and we won the half-way prize. So I learned that not only do I not know as much about the wilderness as my dogs, but I don't know anything about competition. And it is my job to love the dogs, care for them, feed them and nurture them, and hold on for dear life.

So in parting, I want to say to each and everyone of Holton Arms' 1999 graduating class, I hope very dearly that each one of you is able to find your dream. And when you do—love it, nurture it, and hold on for dear life.

REMEMBERING JOHN MARK LACOVARA

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, it is with sadness that I call to the attention of my colleagues the recent passing of one of our most loyal and hard-working former Senate staff members, John Mark Lacovara.

Mark, as he was called by his family and friends, was part of a Capitol Hill

family, joining both his father and sister in holding staff positions in the U.S. Senate. Mark began his Senate career in 1969. He worked his way up the ranks in a number of jobs, starting first as an elevator operator, then as an enrolling clerk, and finally capping his career as the Senate journal clerk.

Those of us who knew him admired his tireless and cheerful dedication to this body. Often he would be the last one to leave his office at night and the first to arrive in the morning, no matter how late the previous session had ended. He truly loved his job, but due to health reasons, he resigned in 1997.

Mark was born in Washington. He grew up in Rockville and graduated from Richard Montgomery High School. Attending night school while maintaining his full-time Senate duties, he received a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in American history from the University of Maryland. He served as a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve for many years.

Mark Lacovara passed away on October 3, 2006. Mark was the son of the late John Lacovara, administrative assistant to the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and Mrs. Patricia Lacovara Ingold of Springfield. My colleagues join me in extending our deepest sympathy to her and Mark's sisters, Dale Monno, a retired lieutenant with the Capitol Police, and Joyce. He will be missed by all of his friends in the Senate.

TRIBUTE TO BOB MCGOWAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of Bob McGowan, the Washoe County assessor. After more than 24 years in office, Bob will retire this year as the longest serving elected department head in the county. His personable demeanor and dedication to service will be missed.

Bob has been a resident of Nevada for more than 38 years. After working in the Nevada Attorney General's office, Bob made the first of many successful runs for elected office. In 1982, the citizens of Washoe County elected him as their county assessor. For more than two decades, Bob has presided over the growth of Washoe County. From the rising real estate values at Lake Tahoe to the rapid development in the city of Reno, Bob has sought to provide fairness for Washoe County residents.

Most importantly, Bob has never forgotten that the goal of elected office is service. After his election in 2002, he told the Reno-Gazette Journal: "From the first day I went in office, we've always been a public service organization, not just a property appraisal." Under Bob's guidance, the assessor's office has become more responsive to Washoe County Residents. For example, Bob moved the assessor's office into the digital age, and residents of Washoe County can now access many forms online. Bob has also worked to save the taxpayers money, trimming his own budget to return more than \$2

million to the Washoe County general fund.

As the county assessor, Bob has always been in tune with the issues of Washoe County. He has navigated controversies over rising property values with ease, taking the time to talk with people he serves. To this day, residents are amazed that Bob is so approachable and accessible. He can quickly put a visitor at ease with his humble demeanor and his frequent jokes. In fact, I cannot recall a time that I have met with Bob when he hasn't told me a funny anecdote or story.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Bob is a dedicated part of his community. He has served as president for Habitat for Humanity and as an executive board member of the alumni organization for the University of Nevada, Reno. Additionally, as the president of Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful organization, he led an effort to protect the pristine areas surrounding Lake Tahoe. While working to improve Washoe County, Bob also raised three wonderful children in Reno. A few years ago, I had the privilege to host his daughter Megan in my Washington office as an intern.

Mr. President, Bob McGowan has been an important part of northern Nevada for more than two decades. His retirement will leave large shoes to fill, but I am confident that Bob will continue to improve Washoe County for many years to come. It is my great pleasure to offer my congratulations to Bob and the McGowan family.

TRIBUTE TO RALPH E. WALZ

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I recognize the outstanding service of a remarkable Kentuckian, Mr. Ralph E. Walz. Mr. Walz is the executive liaison officer for the Louisville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He will retire from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on January 3, 2007, with over 34 years of dedicated service to our Nation as a member of the U.S. Army (1969–1972) and as a civil servant.

A native of Louisville, KY, Mr. Walz is a graduate of Western Kentucky University. As a young man in the 1960s, Ralph Walz served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam as an enlisted infantryman. Performing his duty on the front lines as a non-commissioned officer, facing the daily dangers of active combat, he bravely and honorably served his country.

Mr. Walz began his distinguished civil service tenure with the Louisville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in 1977. He began his career in the Comptroller's Office, later named Resource Management, where he participated in numerous efficiency reviews, organizational studies, and business-process analysis. During this time, Mr. Walz was instrumental in the transfer of Smithland Lock and Dam to the Louisville District.

In 1981, Mr. Walz helped develop the proposal that resulted in the military

construction mission being reinstated at the Louisville district, making it a full-service district whose impact is felt worldwide.

In 1990, Mr. Walz was chosen as the executive liaison Officer and assigned to the Executive Office. In that capacity, he has been instrumental in coordinating many significant events that showcased our great Commonwealth, including National Society of American Military Engineers Conferences which included military personnel and civilians from all over the United States and overseas.

Mr. Walz has also been a champion of quality-of-life initiatives. He helped implement the Uncle Sam's Child Care Center and initially served as board chairman. He served as board chairman and as a member of the board of directors for his local credit union. And he was chairman of the Kentucky Federal Agency Tourism Council, among many other volunteer activities.

Finally, Mr. President, Mr. Walz is a good neighbor and valued steward of our natural resources and defense assets. He will be long remembered for his patriotism, leadership, mentorship of others, and service to his Nation and the Commonwealth of Kentucky. On the occasion of his retirement, I wish to extend my best wishes to Mr. Ralph Walz, his wife, Mary Lou, and their children, Matthew (Matt) and Jake, and I ask my colleagues to salute this esteemed Kentuckian.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID MORGAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great Kentuckian, Mr. David Morgan, for his service to the Commonwealth and his commitment to the preservation of Kentucky's historic landmarks.

For the past 29 years Mr. Morgan has worked on preserving Kentucky's heritage, helping cities and towns utilize and revitalize their downtowns and historic sites.

On Sunday, December 3, 2006, the Louisville Courier-Journal published an article highlighting Mr. Morgan's many years of service to Kentucky. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD and that the entire Senate join me in thanking this beloved Kentuckian.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Louisville Courier-Journal, Dec. 3, 2006]

PRESERVATIONIST BIDS FAREWELL

(By Chris Poynter)

Most Kentuckians likely do not know David Morgan.

But they have certainly seen his work. If you drive along Paris Pike—the road between Paris and Lexington lined with famous thoroughbred farms—you've seen the historic stone fences and picture-perfect rolling landscapes that he helped protect when the road was widened.

If you've strolled the Main Streets of Kentucky's downtowns—and marveled at the historic buildings—you can thank Morgan for helping revive them.