

2002 BOSTON MARATHON®



JIMMY FUND WALK



Brian M. Richards
Hopkinton to Copley Square
September 29, 2002

The 2002 Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk (BMFW) was special to me. I was doing the walk in memory of my father, and I wanted very much to have this walk to be my best one yet. I left my motel in Milford and headed to Hopkinton at 5:15 AM. I had to smile as I turned on my CD player on in my car and the first song that I heard was "Never on a Sunday" by none other by my favorite singing group, FrankieValli and the Four Seasons (you expecting something different). I made some small talk when I arrived in Hopkinton with some of the walkers, and left at 6:15 AM, some 45 minutes before the official start time. I wanted to avoid a crowded start, and I wanted to arrive somewhat early in Boston to get some food. I was concerned that Hurricane Isidore was going to create a problem, but the weather turned out to be the best weather that I have seen in the five years that I have done the walk. The sky was crystal clear, with



temperature starting at 50 degrees, going up to a very comfortable 68 degrees.

I was carrying two high tech watches this year to measure my time and distance. I had a FitSense FS-1 Pro, which gets a signal from a foot pod, which is basically an accelerometer. The foot pod calibration is based on your stride, which can vary. The FitSense also accepts a signal from a heart rate strap. I put the FitSense in the "stepping" mode, and turned it on at the beginning of my walk. I left it on continuously so I could measure my total time. The second watch



216, which signified that I was one of the early registrants for the 2002 walk. The lines to the port a potty were not that long until the 16-mile point.

The BMJFW does not officially follow the Boston Marathon Course. There is a divergence at the 14-mile point at Wellesley High School, where lunch is served. This adds anywhere from 0.25 to 0.50 of a mile to the walk. I decided to stay on the official Boston Marathon course and bypass the lunch stop. A volunteer told me I would not receive my sticker if I went straight. I declined to tell him where to put the sticker. I decided to forgo the use of the port a potty at the 16-mile point because of the long lines. The Wellesley crowd had not thinned out at that

was a Timex Ironman GPS. This watch is the latest and greatest. I used this watch to measure my walking time. I would start the watch when walking, and stop it when I was at the water stops, or held up at stoplights.

Unlike last year, there were very few people passing me on the route. Water – food stops were located every two to three miles on the walk. One thing I noticed that the stops were not as festive as last year. People last year were dressing up in various costumes to provide entertainment for the walkers. There was none of that this year. I do not know if it had to do with the state of the economy, with corporate downsizing. I stopped at the second water stop to use the port a potty. One walker noticed my camera and dared me to take her picture, which I promptly complied with her wishes. The walk starts with the walkers starting out at the left hand side of the road, switching over to the right hand side at the 6.5-mile point. I made a wisecrack comment to a fellow walker that one could catch the train at Framingham and ride to the finish. One couldn't get away with that because at every water stop you received a circular sticker to be placed on your walker's bib. The color of your sticker was different at each stop. My bib number was

point. The highest hills take place at the 16-mile point in Newton. I was still going strong, but at this point I reflected on my father's struggle with colon cancer. I considered my dad to be the strongest man in the world when I was growing up as a kid. I remember one camping trip that my dad went with me when I was in the Cub Scouts. I was so proud of my dad that I went to every boy on that camping trip and said "There is my dad. He's the strongest man in the world. He really is." I saw him lift a 55-gallon trashcan that three garbage men could not lift in the 1950ies. In 1960 my dad lifted the front end of a VW Beetle so he could see what the front end look like. I honestly believe that if it weren't for my dad the United States would have lost World War II. I realized in 1988 that the strongest man in the world couldn't





“Heartbreak Hill”, between miles 20 and 21 of the Boston Marathon course. In 1936, while running the last of the four Newton hills, defending champion Johnny Kelley finally caught the leader, Ellison “Tarzan” Brown. As he passed him, Kelley gave him a gentle pat on the shoulder, figuring that Brown would quickly fade. Instead, Brown, motivated by this bold move, immediately regained the lead and went on to win. The late Boston Globe sportswriter Jerry Nason coined the term “Heartbreak Hill” in the next day’s issue when he described Kelley’s bitter defeat (“breaking Kelley’s heart”). The statue depicting the event is hard to find, as trees hid it. Heart Break Hill is deceiving, as it is a series of hills.

beat cancer, so that is when I decided to try and do something about it by doing a two day 192 mile bicycle ride called the Pan Massachusetts Challenge (PMC) to benefit the Jimmy Fund. Ten rides and five walks later I’m still trying to help someone be stronger than my dad and beat cancer.

Jimmy Fund Walk	2001 Walk	2002 Walk
Total Time	9:29:00	8:28:03
Walk Time	8:09:08	7:51:04
Steps	57,750	58,714

I was smiling when I got to the 22-mile point. Unlike last year where my heels got so blistered that I was almost forced out of the walk, I was feeling great until some other man my age said, “What the hell are two old men out here doing this walk?” I realized he was talking to me. I didn’t have an answer, and suddenly felt

I met a very religious girl at the 17-mile point. She went on and on about Jesus Christ. Then she found out I was single. She told me she knew the perfect girl for me, age 56 and never married. She asked me to wait for her at the 18-mile point as she went to use the port a potty. I told her to take her time, then I did my Quick Draw McGraw act, exit stage right, and left as fast as I could. There was a different person playing a boom box this year from his SUV. He was playing the theme song to Rocky.

As I approached the 20-mile point I commented to someone as to where Heart Break Hill starts and where was the famous statue of Johnny Kelly was. The most famous hill in all of running is almost certainly



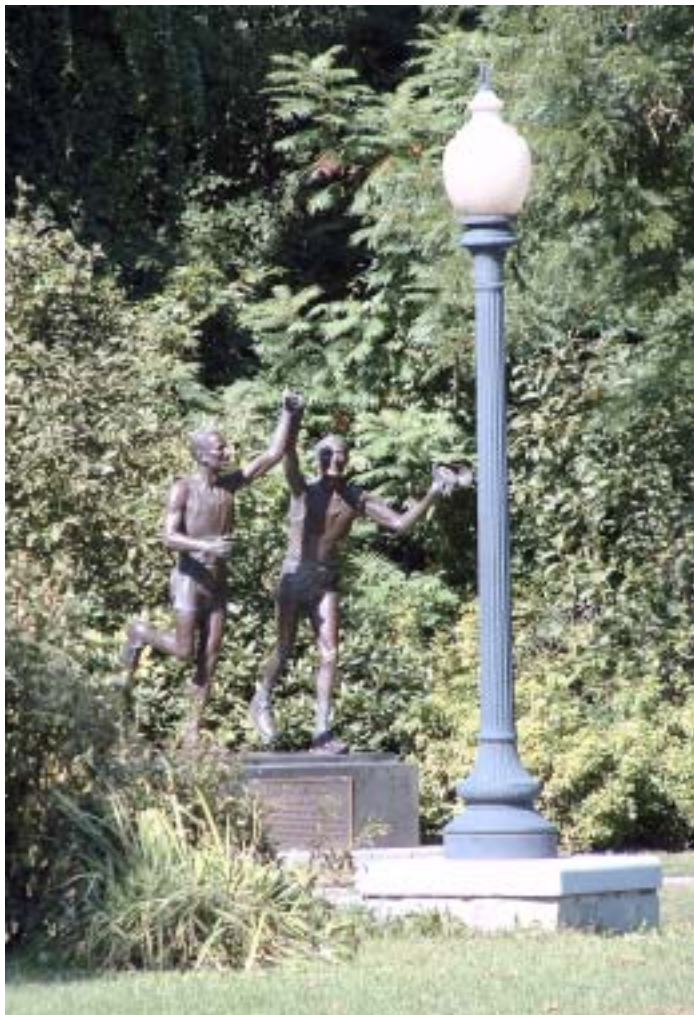


me at the 25.5-mile point. Unlike last year where I was so battered finishing that last 0.7 mile of the walk, I felt like Richard Dreyfuss in Mr. Holland's Opus when he marched in front of his band at a holiday parade. I haven't felt so proud of myself crossing that finish line since my first Pan Massachusetts Challenge in 1988. The loud speaker announces, "Number 216, Brian Richards, from Pennsville New Jersey. A representative from the Garden State."

I'm sure if my dad were alive today he would have been proud of me. We never got along to well after my mother died, but this walk he would say I did it on my own. If it wasn't

for my dad I never would have gotten involved in helping someone else try and beat cancer. I am proud to say you help me raise over \$48,000 since 1988 for the Jimmy Fund, in my parent's name. My 2002 Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk is dedicated in memory of my father, Joseph Albert Richards (1919 – 1988), the Strongest Man in the World. Until next year.

Brian M. Richards



old. I brushed off the comment and kept on going my way. Quite a few people who started from Wellesley were in awe of the Hopkinton Walkers. The Hopkinton Walkers stood out because of the number of stickers we had on our bib. The greatest feeling is seeing the Citgo sign. That's the 25-mile point. If you look over to your right you get to see Fenway Park. The last water stop before getting to the finish line was a real blast for



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The 2002 Boston Marathon Jimmy Fund Walk

Walking for our loved ones Both Past and Present

In Memory of

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Dani, Jean, Laura, Linda, Teena



Mom & Dad would be proud. Until next year.
Thank you and may God Bless.

Brian M. Richards