

The Pacesetter

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The passing of a legend Prairie Striders icon Bob Bartling finishes the race

By Dave Graves
Newsletter editor

The man who singularly embodied South Dakota's first running club died unexpectedly Feb. 24, 2024, at age 97.

Bob Bartling, a charter member of Prairie Striders Running Club, its first president and longtime treasurer, suffered a fatal heart attack en route to a South Dakota State University basketball game on that Saturday afternoon and died an hour and a half later. He went quickly, but left the thousands who knew him with memories they will likely never forget.

A select group of those memories and stories about a Bob are shared elsewhere in this issue.

Matt Bien, who directed the Brookings Marathon for 17 years and served as the club's president for six years, said, "I don't think you can overstate how much Bob meant to the running community in Brookings."

When Bartling started running, there was no running community in Brookings. Running was strictly for high school and college athletes.

But in 1966, at age 40, the Brookings native realized he had let the body that supported him as a high school and college athlete get away from him. He gave up smoking, bought a Cooper aerobics book and took up running. It wasn't a pretty experience nor particularly fun at first, with his first run lasting only about 100 yards. But in a month he was up to one lap of the track. In two months he had completed a mile.

Bartling's first timed mile was just under 9 minutes. He was told that the local citizens' record for the mile was



Bob in Briggs Library, standing beside bound volumes of Runner's World.

Hilton Briggs' 6:10. In an interview with Midco Sports in 2016, Bartling said, "Really? Six minutes? Two years later, I got the record."

But Bartling wasn't posting his impressive improvements on Facebook.

Started before the running boom

Recalling those early running days in a 2012 interview with Amy Dunkle, Bartling said, "Oh, the town wasn't ready for it. Drivers honked horns at you, yelled out the window at you ... To get away from the abuse, we'd either run in the early morning before it was light or

in the evenings when it wasn't light, or we'd run in the alleys."

Even though it wasn't what respectable adults did then, the power of running's endorphins could not be denied as well as its physical benefits.

Bartling soon had running partners—Lorne Bartling, a brother 11 years older, and Scotty Roberts, a medical doctor who started running in 1968 at age 44.

In summer 1969, two new track coaches took over — Russ Strande at Brookings High School and Jay Dirksen at SDSU. Dirksen and Strande were in Bartling Furniture Store on one Saturday morning talking to Bob when Dirksen suggested forming a club. The trio agreed and Prairie Striders held its first meeting Sept. 12, 1969, in the east classroom of the Barn, the nickname for what was then the school's gym.

Dirksen invited three of his freshmen runners—John Iverson, Jim Egeberg and Scott Underwood. Other charter members were Bruce Berger, a Brookings High School cross country runner; Chuck McMullen and Keith Morrill, SDSU faculty members; Harvey Mills and Grant Peterson.



2024 RACE SCHEDULE

Arbor Day 5KFriday, April 26	Predictor MileWednesday, July 31
Scotty Roberts 5K.....Friday, May 10	Oakwood Lakes Trail Run.....Saturday, Aug. 3
Brookings Marathon Half & Relays Saturday, May 11	Jack 15Saturday, Sept. 21
Harvey Mills Longest Day 10K Saturday, June 22	Bob Bartling Hobo Day 5K.....Saturday, Oct. 12
Beef and Eggs 5K.....Saturday, July 13	Turkey Day Run..... Thursday, Nov. 28

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Club treasurer for 41 years

Bartling served as president that first full year—1970. From 1971 to 2012, he served as treasurer.

Dues started at \$1 and membership grew to more than 900 in 1976. Bartling relished telling of how some were aghast when dues were doubled the next year. Membership dropped to half. Later dues increased to \$3 and have stayed at \$5 for decades.

Lori Bocklund, a 1983 SDSU grad and a five-time All-American, recalls how Bartling was able to increase club revenues without increasing dues.

“As treasurer, Bob oversaw the annual renewals and would send out the budget status (which was faltering) with a small form and an envelope to send it back. He built awareness of the situation without saying ‘We need money!’ A lot of passionate members responded with more than their dues. Then he recognized their contributions.

“So more of these competitive people did the same. You see the pattern. When teased about this outcome, Bob smiled, laughed and plausibly denied it went exactly according to plan,” she said.

A shoe store begins

Throughout the club’s 55-year history, it has never had an edifice all its own. But for practical matters, the mecca for runners from Brookings and far around was the basement of 410 Fourth St.

That was part of Bartling’s Furniture and later Bartling’s Nike Shoes. In 1969 he used furniture store stationery to order 10 pairs of running shoes from Blue Ribbon Sports after seeing an ad in a running magazine. They were Onitsuka Tiger shoes, now known as Asics, priced at \$8.95 wholesale. In 1972 he got a letter from Blue Ribbon Sports, asking if he would switch to their new company, Nike.

Bartling agreed – “I didn’t know any better,” Bartling was fond of saying. He became the first Nike dealer in South Dakota and one of the first in the nation, exclusively selling that brand. Never selling shoes at retail price, he quickly grew the business. Many high school and college programs became his customers.

But many an individual runner, whether local or just passing through, trekked down those wooden stairs to glaze over the stacks and stacks of orange Nike shoe boxes, check out the latest issue of Runner’s World or find a book on marathon training, and, of course, to connect to the man who was both a running guru and an irresistible personality.

Library: From basement to Briggs Library

Paul Danger, a former SDSU track coach, in a 2005 interview recalled his first trip to the store. It was 1987 and Danger was a sophomore at St. James, Minnesota. He was in town to run the



Bartling’s Nike Shoes, a downstairs mecca for running enthusiasts. In this mid- to late-1980s photo, Bartling poses by the Prairie Striders Library. Note the card file which Bartling kept up until his last day.

Longest Day 10K. “Like many runners in the area, one of the stops in Brookings is Bartling’s Shoe Store and that was a stop for me also because of the vast running library he has accumulated,” Danger said.

The library started when the club bought a lifetime subscription to Runner’s World for \$75 early in the publication’s history. Subscriptions to other publications followed. Books were purchased and, in later years, donated. Capitalizing on a friendship with then-SDSU President Hilton Briggs, each year of the magazine issues were sent through the college library to be hardbound.

From 1978 until selling the shoe store in 2009, the collection was housed in the basement of 410 Fourth St. and Bartling kept careful track of each article.

With the sale of the store to Lyle Claussen, the business moved to the 400 block of Main Avenue and the library squeezed into a back room. The library gained a permanent home at H.M. Briggs Library on the South Dakota State University in June 2015. The collection is housed in compact shelving on the lower level of the Briggs Library.

It includes 636 volumes of books, over 5,000 periodical and newsletter issues, and has the results of 16 annual races.

Bartling’s passion transitioned to library

For the next 8 ½ years, Briggs Library became one of Bartling’s favorite destinations. Rare was the workday that Bartling couldn’t be found in the archives section of the library, cataloging articles onto 4x6 index cards. There are 8,000 cards, breaking down each issue in the journal collection into one of three categories – subject, event or people.

While the library was a club collection, Bartling was the caretaker and he took great pride in it. One of his great delights was to give a tour of the library. At Bob’s funeral, his son, Dave, recalled a recent conversation with Bob. Bob told Dave, “Tomorrow is going to be a great day.” “Why is that, Dad?” “I get to give TWO tours.”

His passion for the library didn’t go unnoticed.

In 2019, he was named South Dakota Friend of Library at the South Dakota Library Association conference. The

nomination letter stated, “Bob Bartling is a true friend of Briggs Library. The library staff looks forward to seeing him each day and his passion for his work is contagious. He makes a point of being part of the library; he attends most of the special events and spends time getting to know the library’s staff.”

In his eulogy, Dave Bartling recalled his dad saying the library staff “treats me like royalty.”

He certainly was revered there, especially in the archives section, where he worked daily. They held a small gathering to observe his 97th birthday, which was Aug. 26, 2023.

He reveled in telling stories about the old days, including Hilton Briggs challenging future Olympian Ron Daws at the start of the 1966 Jack 15. But Bartling’s fountain of enthusiasm bubbled over when he talked about his current time at the library.

He shared that there is a door at the end of the first floor that says “employees only.” “Well, I know I’m not an employee. They don’t pay me,” he said, drawing a round of laughter. Continuing, he said, “Now, it is finally solved.” Bartling reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a card. “I have in my hands an ID for SDSU and in the bottom right-hand corner, it says STAFF – S-T-A-F-F” he shouts.

An accomplished runner in his own right

While the modest Bartling was never one to brag about himself, his personal running accomplishments were something to shout about also.

1978 was a banner year for him. At age 52 he clocked PRs in the mile (4:52), the 10K (35:26) and the marathon (2:45:14, City of Lakes, Minneapolis). “I wanted to break 2:45. The weather was perfect, but I just couldn’t do it.”

In the early 1980s he ran with other local runners such as Scotty Roberts and Harvey Mills to set a national age record for the 4x1-mile; he ran a record 38 Jack 15s, the last at age 89.

However, all of Bartling’s accomplishments on the track and road, all his encyclopedic knowledge of

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running and all of his pioneering efforts in the running shoe industry don't define why he was more than a legend. He was a beloved legend because of his passion, care for others and insuppressible smile.

That was stressed at his funeral.

'Will continue to inspire ... us'

Robby Flint, co-pastor of First Presbyterian Brookings, called Bob an "an eternal optimist. With Bob there were no strangers. Everyone was his friend. And what an enthusiasm for life. He had witty stories and a boyish smile. He was humble and modest, but never shy and he told you some of the best stories you ever heard."

In her condolence greeting to the Bartling family, Andriette Wickstrom, a longtime friend, Prairie Strider member and former race team member, wrote, "I was hoping this sad time without Bob would never come. If anybody should live forever, it should be Bob. I consider



The winning foursome at the 1982 Kampeska Mixed Relay Classic, from left, Tami Wermers, Bob, Mike Dunlap and Virgil Tjeerdsma.

myself very fortunate to have had him as a friend.

"His positive energy was contagious and will continue to inspire those of us left behind. I considered Bob to be

a mentor, not only for running and reading, but for showing us all how to live an exemplary life.

"My sympathy to you all as his spirit lives on to guide us in aging gracefully."

We should all be so good at helping others have a great day

By Lori Bocklund

Editor's note: Bocklund was a five-time All-American and SDSU's first GTE Academic All-American who ran at State from 1979 to 1983. The friendship they developed in her college years was maintained throughout Bob's lifetime.

Everyone who knew Bob, loved Bob. He was legendary in so many ways — accomplishments, stories, commitment, passion, energy, inspiration, pure joy and love — for his fellow human beings and for his many endeavors.

People have said they never saw Bob Bartling have a bad day. The corollary is anybody who interacted with Bob had a great day.

What he may not have recognized, because of his humility and his external focus (on YOU, if you were in his presence), was how much we cherished our time with him. I'm not sure he fully understood the impact he had on us — as 18-year-olds or young adults or mature adults — because the way he engaged was just the natural thing for him to do. It was never about him.

For the latest example, watch or listen to his recent "On the Run with Beards & Dun" podcast. The hosts try, but fail, to get Bob to discuss his own accomplishments. Bob was ready to tell fun stories of the past, talk about the library or Prairie Striders, and discuss current runners with great promise, but he wouldn't engage in a discussion about his 38 Jack 15s or many marathons (and running 2:45 at age 52). It



Bob and Lori in August 2023, when Bob turned 97.

wasn't about him.

Bob would probably be touched yet embarrassed about all the attention we are giving him. He might quickly change the subject if he could. But we will always remember because his impact on us will endure.

It is about you this time, Bob. Thank you for all you did for us, for Brookings, for Prairie Striders Running Club and SDSU. Our lives are better for having known you.

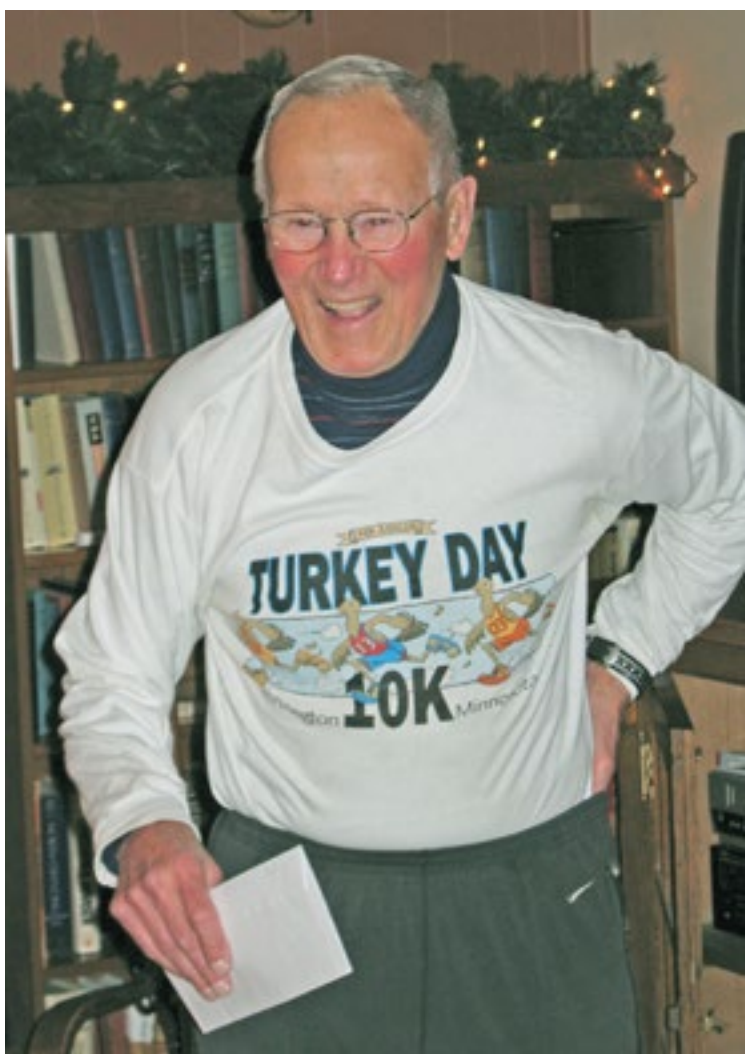
Others share their Bob story



Posing at the Nike Cross Heartland Regionals in Sioux Falls in 2011 are, from left, long-time Prairie Striders Vicki Nelson and Andriette Wickstrom, Emily Berzonsky, then a freshman at Brookings High School, and Bob.



Lucas & Vicki Nelson with Bob in 2017



Bob was the first recipient of the club's Friend of Running Award in 2007.



Club librarian Bob Bartling reaches for "Usain Bolt, Faster Than Lightning" from the Prairie Striders Library Collection at Briggs Library on the campus of South Dakota State University. The book was among 92 donated by Strider Andriette Wickstrom. Her donation represents 15 to 20 percent of the club's total collection. The books are shelved on the library's lower level and can be checked out.

Rod DeHaven

SDSU track coach since 2004, Jackrabbit athlete 1984-89

Snakes alive en route to Midnight Madness

My story would be from my first trip with the Striders to participate in the '84 Midnight Madness 20k. A big group was heading down in a van from Brookings with a stop in Sioux Falls to pick up the rest of the crew. There was lots of conversation along the way.

Just a bit before lunch, Bob asked if someone could grab his peanuts and pass them up to him. I believe that Rob Beyer had placed a "snake in the can" into Bob's peanut can. Bob opened the can and snake springs out. He retorted, "Why, you characters!!"

Laughter ensued for several minutes afterwards. Bob of course ran the 20k and stayed up until the wee hours of the morning.



Bob, Rod DeHaven, and Tom Woodall

Mike Dunlap

Ran at SDSU 1975-78 and two-time Olympic marathon trials qualifier

A star-lite night running with Bob

It was January 1976, my freshman year at State, and I ran my first indoor race at Frost Arena. Mike Bills, Mark Bills, Randy Fischer and I all ran about a 4:25 mile. After the race, Bob was running his evening workout and stopped by the track meet. We talked a while and Bob said "I'm going to finish my run." I said, 'Bob, I need to cool down. Can I go run with you?' He said, 'Sure Mike. Come along.' He and I took off north to the

bypass and then to the interstate.

Interstate 29 didn't go beyond Brookings (Sixth Street exit) at that time. I-29 ended at Brookings. The interstate was being completed and would open later that year. But from the north bypass interstate entrance ramp to the south Sixth Street exit, the interstate was paved but not open to traffic. We were running right down the middle of the interstate for a mile. The tall interstate interchange lights were on and the mile was perfectly lit.

It was 10 degrees, crystal clear, you could see the stars. I said, 'Bob, it's just awesome out here.' He said, 'Yeah, isn't it.' It's just one of those memories I will never forget.



Dick Beardsley

World-class marathoner, Jack 15 record holder and one-semester student at State

Who can resist Bob?

In 1981 me, Bob and Dun (Mike Dunlap) drove with Bob to Lincoln, Neb., for the Statehood Days 10 miler, on Feb. 28. At the time it was one of the most competitive races in the Midwest. I ran for New Balance at the time but on the morning of the race Bob convinced me to wear a Prairie Striders singlet as he said NB would never know about a race held in Nebraska.

Of course I said I would. Well low and behold I won the race in course record time (48:25/4:51 pace) and in the next issue of Track & Field News was a picture of me wearing a Prairie Striders singlet! I got in a bit of trouble from New Balance and New Balance lawyers called Bob (they must have figured out he was the driving force behind me wearing the singlet) and threatened to bring a lawsuit against him and the Prairie Striders if it ever happened again!

Bob, me, and Dun had many a laugh over the years with that story!

Chris Gruenhagen

Brookings High School cross country coach and former Jackrabbit runner

An all-weather runner ... even at 90+

So many memories of Bob to share, but one that stands out to me occurred about 6-7 years ago at the tail end of Bob's running career.

I had headed out running early one morning during the cold winter months and the roads were very slippery. I recall not running very far before turning back home thinking the ice was far from an ideal running surface.

As I turned past the high school bus garage about a block from Bob's apartment here, he came running down the street. I stopped him and said "Bob it's pretty slippery out there, be careful." In true Bob fashion he simply replied with, "Thanks for the report" and off he continued with his run.

Bob's probably right, no such thing as bad weather (or conditions), just soft people.

Matt Bien

Brookings physician, former club president and Brookings Marathon director for 17 years

An inspiration and a resource

I don't think you can overstate how much Bob meant to the running community in Brookings. From his encyclopedic knowledge of the sport to a recounting of running days gone by, his stories will be missed.

I am grateful to Bob for his assistance in preparing a 50-year history book for the Brookings Marathon. Without his attention to detail and careful collation of historical records, the book would not have been possible.

For me, "inspirational" is the word that comes to mind when I think of Bob. I can only wish to be moving, much less running, like Bob in my 90s!

Randy Fischer

Jackrabbit standout in the mid-1970s, five-time Brookings Marathon champion and race record holder

Peanuts and PRs

I had known Bob Bartling since 1974 and he was always upbeat whenever I saw him and he loved talking about running!

One of my fondest memories was going with Bob to City of the Lakes Marathon in Minneapolis, in 1978, when he ran a 2:45 marathon at age 52. I was really impressed! On the trip back he had plenty of peanuts and great conversations. I went with Bob on other running trips to the Twin Cities for a 5-mile race and again we ate plenty of peanuts after the race.

Amazing what Bob could do. I had great respect for his running talents and Bob as a person!



On his 97th birthday observation, Bob Bartling, the club's first president in 1970, gathers with other presidents. From left, Shari Landmark, 2010-12; Bob, Dave Graves, 2013-present; and Steve Britzman, 1995-98.

Dave Graves

Club president, Jack 15 director and fellow bike enthusiast

Bike before car

Several years ago Bob and I had been talking about his exploring the possibility of buying an electronic bike. I knew he had done a test ride. Then one morning he stopped in my office. "I did it. I bought an e-bike. It was either replace my 1978 Buick or get the bike. I got the bike."

Spring in his step even at 97

In mid-fall 2023, I'm on my bike approaching Briggs Library and I see Bob, at age 97, walking rapidly towards the library. I stop and say, "Bob, what are you in such a hurry about?" He responds, "I tried to break into a trot and I just couldn't do it."

Dick Bartling

Nephew of Bob, son of Lorne

A keen judge of performances

Six months before he passed away, I was visiting my Dad, Lorne, at the Brookings United Living Center where he was because of Alzheimer's. We headed out for a walk just as Uncle Bob arrived for a visit.

As we chatted, he told us that he had just watched the finish of the Jack 15. I inquired about the winning time and Bob paused with a troubled look on his face before responding with "Let's just say that any of the three of us, at our peak, would've won it today."

Dad got his own troubled look and even with Alzheimer's said "Oh no! Really, that slow?" With obvious cynicism rather than his usual eternal optimism, Bob responded with "I'm afraid so."

Even a card for Caitlyn Jenner

Not long after the Prairie Striders Library Collection moved to the Briggs Library, I visited Bob there for a tour. I was amazed, but not surprised, at his labor of love handwritten notecard cataloging system by name and subject for all the material. Bob was proud of how efficient his old school system was at locating articles in the vast volumes housed there.

It was simple: Find the name of an athlete or coach alphabetically in a card



From left, Dave, Bob and Dick Bartling gather after the 2006 Bob Bartling Hobo Day 5K. The T-shirts read Bartling Family Reunion 2006.

file box and every article that included him/her was listed on their card(s).

On his desk, I noticed an otherwise blank card with "Jenner, Caitlyn" handwritten at the top. I said "Bob, I'm really impressed with how current you are (Bruce had transitioned to Caitlyn just a few months before). "Obviously, there are lots of Bruce articles and results, but do you think there'll ever be any track and field related ones for Caitlyn?"

Bob smiled, chuckled, and replied "You never know, but I'm ready just in case."

Read the sign and get out there

The advertising slogan for the Nike shoe store in the basement of Bartling's Furniture was "Go down below and save some dough." Above the stairway leading down to the shoes was a plaque that read "There's no such thing as bad weather, just soft people."

Dave Bartling

Bob's son and frequent companion in his later years

Note: *Dave shared these at the funeral or the reception.*

Bartling – Competitive, humble, humorous

• Bob was struggling when he ran (shuffled) his last Jack 15 at age 89 and fell several times, scrapping his knees and elbows. At one point, a gal came out to wipe off the blood. Bob said, "I don't have time for this. I'm in a road race!" Later when he fell, Dave was helping Bob up. Bob responded, "You can't do that. I'll be disqualified!"

• In 2004, the Hobo Day 5K was named after Bob. Bob called Dave and said, "Can you believe it? They're going to name the Hobo Day 5K after me."

• Bob always loved to go fishing. Dave



The 89-year-old master Brookings runner finished in a walking time of 4:04:52, just edging his son, Dave, shown at right. Bob overcame a stumble at Mile 6 and cramps at Mile 12 to finish his 38th Jack 15.

would call Bob and say the fish are biting at whatever lake. "Do you want to go?" "Well, of course."

• Dave and Bob were attending the Summit League basketball tournament in Sioux Falls in 2023. After attending an afternoon session, they were going to go to Red Lobster for dinner. The car wouldn't start. They were unable to get mechanic or towing help, so they took a room at a nearby motel. Sitting in their room, the ever cheerful Bartling quipped, "At least we know what we're going to wear tomorrow."

• Last spring (2023), Dave Bartling and Bob were watching an SDSU baseball game. Recently retired football coach John Stiegelmeier was climbing up the bleachers. Dave yells out, "Looks like you got the day off." Stig responds, "Actually, I'm working today. I'm doing fundraising and I'm sitting right between you two." Bob looks at Dave and says, "Ohhh my."

Andriette Wickstrom

Longtime Prairie Striders racing team member

A man of diverse interests, including zumba

The reason I was fortunate to meet Bob was because I got out of my comfort zone and left my small town at 3 a.m. in February 1996 to drive to the big, unfamiliar city of Lincoln, Neb., for the Statehood Run. Gloria Jansen, a Prairie Striders racer, and I both ran well, so she convinced Bob to let me join the team.

Wow! That changed my life, and

I will forever be grateful to Bob for his encouragement and enthusiastic energy over the years that allowed me to improve my running while being part of the Prairie Striders, a very wonderful organization of outstanding people.

Bob was never afraid to try something new, and every time I ran into one of his acquaintances, I learned his life experiences were vast — attending things like poetry groups and zumba classes, reading many books on topics other than running, socializing after hours with the Briggs Library staff, scoring wrestling for 20 years, etc.

An excellent role model for graceful aging, I will always remember how he adapted to life's change with a positive approach. A couple years ago when he was recuperating (briefly) in a care facility after hip surgery, he brought along his great attitude during the challenging recovery process, brightening the spirits of the staff who never heard him complain.

It will be difficult to run Brookings races without seeing Bob, but his influence will always be a part of me, along with everyone else who was lucky enough to have known him.

More memories of Bob

Midco's Josh Munce interviews Bob at age 90

www.facebook.com/MidcoSports/videos/1498380223516540/

6:10 Hilton Briggs, two years later I got the record 6:07

Bob's 97th birthday talk:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=frl21Mi9PIE

"On the Run with Beards & Dun," a podcast

recorded six days before his death

www.beardsanddunpod.com/podcast/episode/4f10404f

Funeral service:

www.eidsnessfuneralhome.com/obituary/robert-bob-bartling

Member Spotlight



Name: Tevis Holzer

Age: 34

Residence: Volga, SD

Occupation: Structural engineer

Family: Wife (Kim), Daughters Grace (9) and Nora (6)

Years as a Prairie Strider member: I think 2?

Why you're a member: Prairie Striders provides great race opportunities for Brookings area runners to participate in. I wanted to be a part of making sure

they continue into the future.

What you enjoy about running: Challenging myself, maintaining physical and mental health, watching our daughters develop the determination and motivation to start running.

Favorite running memory: Finishing the Brookings Half Marathon in under 1:30. It was the year (2022) the race was rescheduled for the fall, which gave me all summer to train and meet that goal.

Your favorite Prairie Striders race: Oakwood Lakes Trail Run, our family usually tries to camp on the same weekend.

Favorite workout: 30-minute interval training or just a simple, fast 5k.

Your running goal: Finish a full marathon in 2024

Member Spotlight



Name: David Meyer

Age: 70

Residence: Brookings, SD

Occupation: Orthodontist, Retired

Family: one daughter, Andrea, three sons, Scott, John, and Paul. Also eight granddaughters and two grandsons

Years as a member: Since 1987, 37 years

Why you are a member: I have always enjoyed running and it is fun watching others enjoy the sport as well. I like supporting the running community and promoting running in Brookings.

What you enjoy about running: Running is a good way to unwind and one can enjoy the sport on your own or with a group of fellow runners. It is also fun to watch young athletes get into running and surprise themselves and others

when they have a good performance. I enjoy the opportunity to volunteer at the SDSU indoor track meets in the SJAC to see our athletes compete.

Favorite running memory: 2 great memories. I finished first in 3 events in the 1971 South Dakota State High School track championships. 100 yd dash, high and low hurdles. Surprised myself and was a great day! I have fond memories of my first half marathon.

Your favorite Prairie Striders race: I have always enjoyed the Beef & Eggs 5K and helped to sponsor this race when it began. The Brookings Half Marathon is also a wonderful course running through our beautiful community.

Favorite workout: I always enjoyed running a course down to Edgebrook Golf Course, through the shelter of trees and along the bike path around 3M.

Your running goal: I had to stop running a few years ago due to a back surgery. I walk to stay in shape, but would hope to get back to running some 5K races occasionally.

Volunteers needed for Scotty Roberts 5K

Chuck McCullough, director of the Scotty Roberts 5K, is looking for volunteers for the event, which is the evening before the Brookings Marathon. The race starts at 6 p.m. Friday, May 10. Volunteers are needed starting at 5:30 p.m. The race starts and ends at Pioneer Park.

If available, please contact McCullough at chuck.mccullough@avera.org.

Needed: 2005 Hobo Day mug

As Dave Bartling has organized his father's possession, he finds a complete collection of the Bob Bartling Hobo Day 5K mugs except for 2005. The race was named in Bob's honor in 2004. Anyone who would like to donate a 2005 mug to complete the collection should contact the club at run@prairiestriders.org



Meeting of the marathon directors

Dani Bohn, the new director of the Brookings Marathon, poses with Matt Bien, who directed the race for 17 years. Bien has guided the transition, but will step away for the 55th running of the third oldest continually run marathon in the nation. The marathon, which started in 1970, will use the theme "Staying Alive at 55" for this year's event, which is May 11.

College researchers examining benefits of group exercise

A pair of researchers from a Warren Wilson College, a private college in Swannanoa, North Carolina, are studying the psychological benefits of group movement (specifically looking at the mental health effects of both ecstatic dance and running clubs).

The senior undergraduate researchers are Madison England and Alder Donovan-Cook.

To participate in their study, go to: [group movement study](#)

For more information, contact Donovan-Cook at adonovancook.f20@warren-wilson.edu.

Bargmann, other track alums endow head coaching post

By SDSU Athletics

With the creation of the first head coaching endowment in Jackrabbit athletics, the South Dakota State University track and field and cross country programs join a select group.

The Bargmann Head Coach for Track & Field/Cross Country endowment makes SDSU the 12th track and field/cross country program in the country to have its head coach position endowed. The effort was spearheaded by a former Jackrabbit student-athlete and Chester native Brent Bargmann.

Director of Athletics Justin Sell said. "This fund will provide new and innovative opportunities to recruit and retain quality coaches, as well as enhance the student-athlete experience on our campus."

Following graduation from SDSU in 1987, Bargmann embarked on a career in the tech sector, the bulk of which he spent in Southeast Asia. His return to his home state in the late 2010s provided Bargmann more of an opportunity to reconnect with his alma mater.

While Bargmann provided the lead gift to make the endowment possible, several other Jackrabbit track and field/cross country alumni provided substantial gifts of their own to help the fund surpass the million-dollar mark, including:

- Rob Beyer (Class of 1986)



Lead donor Brent Bargmann is flanked by Justin Sell, left, SDSU athletic director, and head coach Rod DeHaven while posing in the Sanford-Jackrabbit Athletic Complex.

- Brad and Christine Cordts (Brad-Class of 1986)
- Paul Danger (Class of 1995)
- Paul Morgan (Class of 1990)
- Todd and Melissa Sheldon (Todd-Class of 1984)
- Carolyn Steinborn (Class of 1983)
- Curt and Cindy Swanhorst (Curt-Class of 1981)
- Clint and Billie Jo Waara (Clint-Class of 1993)

The creation of the Bargmann endowment has brought about a full-circle moment for current SDSU head coach Rod DeHaven, who was a teammate and roommate of Bargmann during their

days as Jackrabbit student-athletes.

"I'm blown away by Brent's generosity, as well as that of the other donors who stepped forward to make this endowment possible," DeHaven said. "It is a reflection of the relationships that so many built on campus while representing SDSU in cross country and track and field. The endowment helps continue to move the program forward and provides stability in the ever-changing world of collegiate athletics."

Additional contributions to the Bargmann Endowment can be made through the [SDSU Foundation](#).

Club's oldest member, Shank, dies at 109

Boyd Shank, at age 109, the oldest member of Prairie Striders by more than a decade, died March 4, 2024, at his Brookings residence.

(Interestingly, Shank lived in the same Christine Avenue townhome complex at the club's second oldest member, Bob Bartling, age 97. See separate story on Bartling.)

Shank was recruited into the club Bartling decades ago. While Shank never ran a road race, he was a dedicated jogger at the SDSU wellness center and continued to exercise on his Airedyne at home after his running days ended.

Shank was born on Nov. 5, 1914, to J. Dee and Effie (Gossard) Shank in Jewell County, Kansas. He grew up on a north central Kansas farm and attended country grade school. He graduated from Superior, Neb., High School in 1931, and received a bachelor's degree in agronomy from the University of Nebraska in 1935. He then went on to receive a doctorate in genetics from Iowa State University in 1941.

He worked as a cotton breeder and assistant associate professor at the University of Arkansas from 1941 to 1946, and a corn breeder, associate professor and professor at South Dakota State University from 1946 to 1980, retiring as professor emeritus in 1980. During his time at SDSU, Shank developed several lines of hybrid corn.

Shank is survived by his two sons, David and Timothy, both of Washington



state; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Clarice Shank, who was a home economics teacher at SDSU.

Branick succumbs to cancer

Kevin Branick, a member of Prairie Striders and a supporter of its scholarship drive, died March 6, 2024, after a battle with cancer.

Branick, 69, of Sioux Falls, ran at South Dakota State University alongside his twin brother and two other sets of identical twins. Both of his sons, Connor and Brendan, followed him on the Jackrabbit track team.

Branick graduated in 1980 with a degree in agronomy. He began working at Pioneer Hi-Bred in 1989 and has spent more than 34 years advising clients and other sales representatives. Branick had a passion for science and chemistry, always looking for ways to improve soil and crop production.

Branick is survived by his wife of 33 years, Becky, of Sioux Falls; a daughter, Kate Branick, Sioux Falls; two sons, Connor (Mercedes) Branick, Omaha, Neb., and Brendan (Erin) Branick, Sioux Falls; two grandchildren, two brothers, Patrick (Mary) Branick, Eau Claire, Wisc., and Joseph (Terry) Branick, Edwardsville, Kansas; two sisters, Eileen (Randy) Dolezal, Redwood Falls, Minn., and Bridget Branick, Renville, Minn.; and a brother-in-law, George Stolzenburg, Clyde, Kansas.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Canice and Helen Branick; a brother, Michael; and a sister, Mary Stolzenburg.