



## Tracy Thomas, '83 A&S

A 1983 graduate with a bachelor of fine arts, Tracy Thomas still works with ceramics, does pottery, and is a member of the local potter's club. But it's not her career. Instead she pursues another passion she developed in her years at Ohio Northern, physical fitness and running.

In high school, Thomas was a basketball player, and was recruited to play at ONU under former coach Gayle Lauth. After a year and a half, Thomas dropped the basketball and began serious running, specifically the 10,000-meter event (or the 10k) in track and field.

That passion for running led to her business, Body Mechanic Fitness, located in Champaign, Ill. which specializes in personal training, running, lifting weights, and resistance training. In addition, it sparked her participation in first, marathons, and then ultramarathons - events with distances longer than 50 miles.

"I was running marathons and was plateauing in my times, and that's when I started running the ultramarathons," she said. "These races have been happening much longer than people would have thought, and in the United States alone, there are about thirty-five 100-milers per year."

There are many differences between marathons and ultramarathons. While marathons are run on roads where conditions are always consistent, ultramarathons are run on trails in mountains, where the footing and the terrain can be treacherous.

In addition, while marathoners run the entire race distance, the motto of most ultramarathoners is to walk the uphills and run the downhills and flats. In most instances, runners in ultramarathons carry a pack with them containing their own water and supplies since it is usually 2-10 miles between aid stations. Typically, marathon runners do not.

"Training for ultramarathons is much like training for marathons, gradually building up mileage to a long run, and peaking," she said. "My long runs are usually 40 miles, and I usually do a couple of those per week to build up for races."

Another important issue facing all runners, but ultramarathoners specifically, is diet. According to Tracy, "I eat very healthy, but I need a lot of calories, especially the day before and after races. The day of races, I am usually running most of the time, and drinking my Gatorade and eating energy gels."

Thomas is a competitive ultramarathon runner. She was the top female finisher in the Kettle Moraine 100-mile race and the Angeles National Forest 100-miler, finishing 205<sup>th</sup> of all runners in the Los Angeles marathon which boasts 22,000 finishers, and winning the overall championship at the Arkansas Traveller 100-mile in October 2005.

Winning the Arkansas race amazed even Tracy. She took the lead with 20 miles to go, and ended up winning the race by 42 minutes, finishing in a time of 19 hours and 49 minutes.

"Once I was in the lead, I was out of control because I had no idea where my nearest competitor was," she said. "The people who are chasing the leader can always ask the people at the aid stations how far ahead I was, but I didn't have that luxury. Knowing that someone just left the aid station 10 minutes prior gives those folks a lot of motivation that the leader can't have."

In the Arkansas race, Thomas led at the last aid station, but after leaving wasn't sure she was heading in the right direction, as she saw footprints going in the opposite direction toward the aid station, but didn't see any going in the direction she was running. After about 5-10 minutes of contemplating this, she realized that the runners had run the opposite way during another portion of the race, and that since she was in the lead, there wouldn't be footprints going toward the finish line. She had been competing for over 18 hours by this time, but she realized she was going the right way, and ended up winning the race.

What's next for her? Next year, Tracy will be competing in the Grand Slam, which are the four oldest 100-milers in the sport, the Western States 100 in California, the Vermont 100, the Old Dominion 100 and the Wasatch Front 100 in Utah. She will also be raising money for breast cancer research during the Across the Years race which is a 72 hour race over the New Year holiday.

Tracy is putting her ONU education and her bachelor of fine arts to use, as she still enjoys her ceramics and pottery. Her running passion and hobby turned into her career, and her career goals when she was in college turned into her hobby.

## '91

**Patrick Garman**, BSPH, is a major in the U.S. Army and attends the University of Florida in the graduate Pharmacy Healthcare Administration program pursuing a Ph.D. in Pharmaco-Epidemiology. He resides in Fort White, Fla.

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**Michele (Vagedes) Oaks**, BSPH, is a pharmacist for CVS in Troy, Ohio, where she also resides.

**Holly (Eippert) Sauder**, BSBA, is the volunteer coordinator for the Geauga County Park District. In her position, she manages all aspects of the park's volunteer corps. She resides in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

**Nadene (Carbery) Ziegler**, JD, has been elected to the firm partnership of Hodgson Russ LLP, in Albany, N.Y. Her concentration is in municipal finance, including industrial development bond transactions, particularly revenue bonds. She resides in Greenville, N.Y.

## '92

**Jeffrey Bland**, BA, is a health and physical education teacher at Monroe Middle School in Monroe, N.C. In addition, he is a wrestling coach at the high school level, and is a middle school rugby coach. Finally, he plays rugby for the Charlotte Socialites. He resides in Monroe, N.C.

**Susan (Nold) DeFilippis**, BSPH, PharmD '01, is a pharmacist for the Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, N.Y. She resides in White Plains, N.Y. and can be reached at boyz3@verizon.net.