

## RAY SHEPPARD - (9-15-1945 - 6-15-2019)

Sadly the HTC has lost one of the giants who contributed so much to making the club one of the best in the nation.

Beth Benefield provided the following explanation: *"Ray Sheppard died early yesterday in Vandy Hospital. He was 73 and still practicing GYN. How it started was about May 20, maybe 3 weeks after they returned from their 6 week trip to Indochina, Hong Kong, etc. He started feeling bad and they were in Nashville getting ready to go on a rafting trip with family. So they checked into Vandy Hospital where they treated him for Malaria, which treatment didn't work, so it ended up being a bacterial infection in his leads (wires to his pacemaker). After lead extraction and a temporary pacemaker put in etc. he ended up having tricuspid valve surgery. He was on dialysis to remove fluid buildup, had a blood clot in his lung, then his liver started to fail, etc. They took him off life support, as all family was there, about 2 am yesterday"* (6/15/2019).



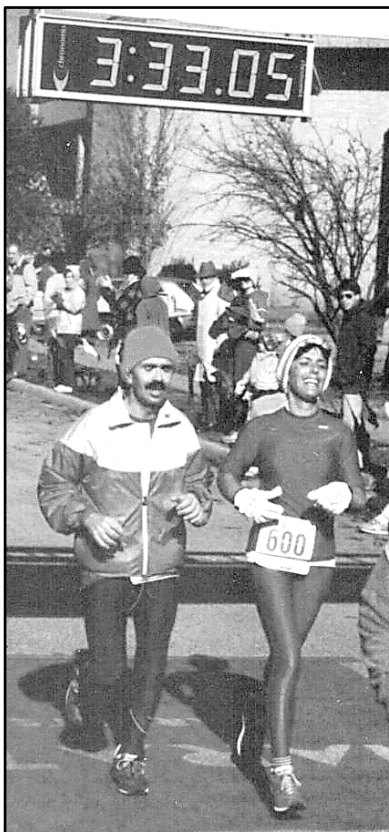
Ray joined the HTC in 1980 and quickly became involved in the HTC volunteering for club races. They directed the HTC Women's Distance Festival 5K Race from 1986 through 1993 when it was one of the HTC's big summer turnout events. Ray was the HTC Treasurer from 1988 through 1991.

In addition to volunteering for most HTC races over the years, they were

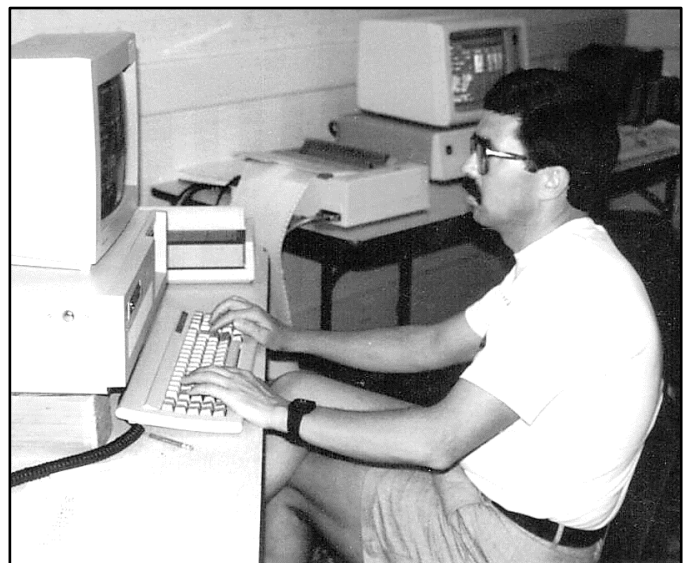
major supporters of the HTC's Spring Fever Kids One Mile Runs and Autumn Chase Kids One Mile Runs. Although not an HTC event, they were heavily involved in the Big Spring Jam 5K for the years that event was held.

Their most time consuming involvement was as Committee Task Coordinators for both the club's Rocket City Marathon and Cotton Row Run. They were Invited Runner Hosts for both of those races from 1984 through 1992. They also provided the Cedarhurst Clubhouse from 1986 through 1992 for the Cotton Row Run Invited Runner Sunday evening Supper and the Monday afternoon Post Race Dinner Party.

Ray was one of the early club members to learn RunScore and they did the computer data entry for Cotton Row from 1986 through 1998. And in 1998 when marathon director Malcolm Gillis didn't have anyone to do the computer data entry Ray stepped in to do it that year.

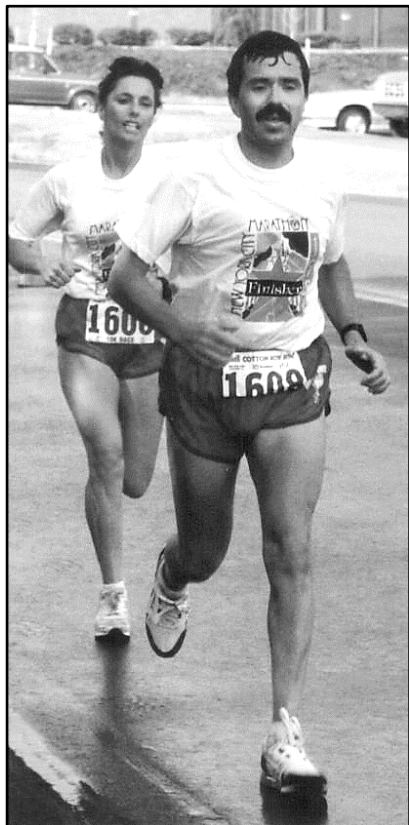


super husband-wife teams who contributed so much to the HTC during the 1980s, 90s and into the 2000s. Ray and Nancy were both avid runners and dedicated volunteers. The picture here is the two of them running and finishing the Rocket City Marathon together in 1985 when they were featured in the **The Huntsville Times** Extra Section.



They were the Task Coordinators for the Rocket City Marathon photography team from 1988 through 1993. This was a major task because it was during the period when we did the finish line photography ourselves.

From 2009 through 2015 they were the marathon task coordinators for the finish line runner handlers.

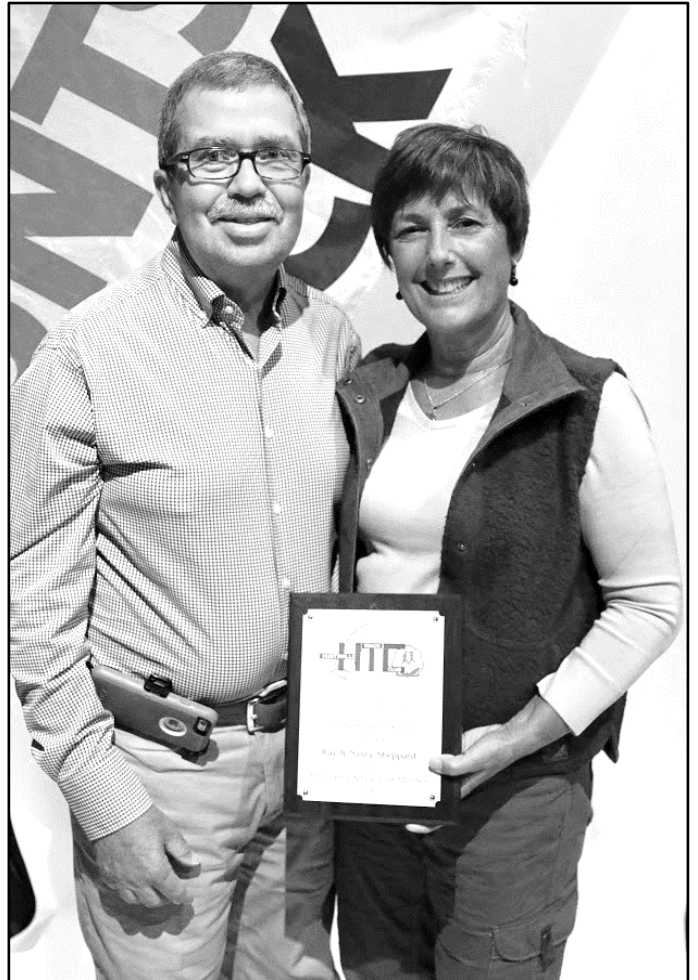


One of the most fascinating tasks they took on in 1984 was directing the Double Ironman Triathlon, the first one in the nation that attracted participants from other countries. They continued directing the event for 12 years until the Oklahoma City bombing when Redstone Arsenal no longer allowed the race to be held on their facilities. It was transferred

to an ex-Navy Seal who conducted events in Virginia Beach.

They both were recipients of the Norm Harris Outstanding Achievement Award in 1987 and Ray won that award again in 1998. They both were recipients of the Tom Bolt President's Award in 1991. This award led then HTC President Lawrence Hillis in his

presentation to tell an interesting story of Ray's dedication. Ray is an OB-GYN physician, an occupation which can have irregular and long hours. Hillis stated the following: *"John Dennison (Cotton Row Director at that time) and Ray were working late one night and Ray was called to the hospital for a delivery. To John's surprise, Ray returned afterwards and they worked until the wee hours of the morning to get the job done."*



Ray and Nancy Sheppard were given the HTC's highest award as Honorary Lifetime HTC Members in 2016.