

SPECIAL **Newsweek** EDITION

# SHE PERSISTED

Moments of Courage, Strength and Rebellion  
in the Fight for Feminism



INTRODUCTION BY  
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# 1967

## Kathrine Switzer Takes on Boston

"NO DAME EVER ran the Boston Marathon!" was what her coach, Arnie Briggs, told 20-year-old journalism student and ardent distance runner Kathrine Switzer when she asked him to train her for the 1967 running of the prestigious race. But Briggs, guff though he may have been, was willing to work with Switzer.

Typically when one runs a marathon, they are pursuing a personal best by racing against the clock or pushing themselves to outpace a rival. On the day of the race, Switzer found herself trying to outrun Jock Semple, the marathon's co-director. Unaware a woman was participating (Switzer had entered using her initials), he physically accosted her a few miles into the race. "Get the hell out of my race, and give me those numbers!" he screamed, while trying to rip Switzer's bib, #261, off her sweatshirt. But she kept running, refusing to let her shock and anger slow her down. "...I knew if I did that no one would believe women could run distances and deserved to be in the Boston Marathon; they would just think that I was a clown, and that women were barging into events where they had no ability." Despite bleeding through a pair of socks and being told she was disqualified, Switzer finished the race in high spirits. And rightly so. She would go on to change the face of distance running, even winning the New York City Marathon in 1974. Five decades after her initial entry, the Boston Marathon announced it would retire her bib number.

**"I do not wish  
women to have  
power over  
men; but over  
themselves."**

—MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT





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