FALL 2017
WOMEN 2 WOMEN
MAGAZINE
INFLUENCING CHANGE
One Stride at a Time
MEET THE PACERS &
KATHRINE SWITZER
Women2Women 2017-2018
Program of Events

THE BOSTON HERALD 1967

Original 1967 caption
"Who says chivalry is dead? When a girl listed as 'K. Switzer from Syracuse' found herself about to be thrown out of normally all-male Boston Marathon today, husky companion Thomas Miller of Syracuse threw block that tossed race official out of the running instead. Sequence show Jock Semple, official, moving in to intercept Miss Switzer, then being bounced himself by Miller."

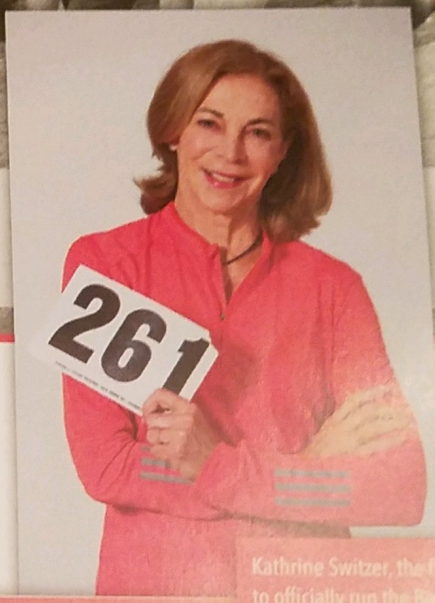

IMAGEN HOPKINS, 67

Kathrine Switzer, the first [illegible] to officially run the Boston Marathon, will be the [illegible] speaker at the [illegible] launch event on October 10. [illegible]

INFLUENCING CHANGE
One Stride at a Time

By Tom Chobot
Pagoda Pacers Youth Program Director

Kathrine Switzer, the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon, will be the keynote speaker for Women2Women's 2017-2018 Launch Event. The event is co-sponsored by W2W and the Pagoda Pacers Athletic Club, and will be held Tuesday, Oct. 10 at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Reading. Kathrine has been influencing change for 50 years – ever since taking on the Boston Marathon in 1967. She is a source of inspiration for anyone who believes in the power of women, and we believe she is the perfect keynote speaker for this special Launch Event.

On any given day in Berks County, residents can be seen practicing a variety of fitness and exercise activities from a simple walk in the park, to any number of extreme sports that can be imagined. This is for good reason as fitness and wellness have become culturally connected to virtually every other aspect of our lives from medical and insurance costs, to productivity both in and out of the workplace. Gender participation is pretty much right down the middle and accepted as such, as physically

active females of virtually all ages have become part of the landscape, but it hasn't always been that way.

While much progress has been made with all women's sports opportunities, running organizations such as local groups GIRLS ON THE RUN (for girls in grades 1st through 8), and the PACERS (for runners of all ages, male and female) have expended a great deal of effort to create a non-judgmental atmosphere from which a strong sense of confidence, self-esteem, and empowerment to the women of our community can be developed, through networking, camaraderie, and fellowship. Again, it was not always this way, which begs the questions, what has changed, how did this happen, and who made it happen?

There are two important factors that impact social and cultural change. First, change does not happen overnight. Sometimes it takes years, even decades of tireless and relentless work. Second, it takes time to take root. Someone must have the strength and courage to break down the barrier first and be willing to endure the cuts and bruises that go with it. This year's keynote speaker, Kathrine Switzer, fits the mold perfectly. She has profoundly influenced change which has affected women in general, the running community, and the connection between the two. In Kathrine's own words, "Running isn't just about running. It's about the sense of empowerment you get from going the distance. That empowerment can help you succeed in so many other activities."

Kathrine Switzer first gained notoriety from the 1967 Boston Marathon, when a race director attempted to tear off her bib number in mid race, a moment the media captured on film and went on to be labeled as one of the most significant photographs of the 20th Century and certainly as a milestone regarding the history of American women. However, that moment only represented one small chapter in the long story of Kathrine's social and cultural contributions. Since then, she has worked relentlessly to influence changes that have directly affected women of all ages, and all walks of life, but particularly in the women's sports arena. One could certainly argue that Kathrine's efforts, along with other pioneers like her, played a sizable role in the passing of the historic piece of legislation we now refer to as TITLE 9 in1972, by forcing our society to ask the question, "If women can indeed run long distance, what else can they do?" As a journalist, TV commentator, and highly influential advocate of women's sports opportunities over the past 50 years, Kathrine helped create and influence numerous women's running events, including the Avon Women's International Marathon. She was closely involved with the New York City Marathon during its early years.

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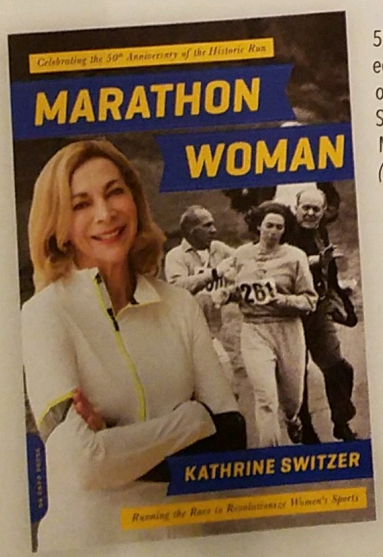
HAGEN HOPKINS 2017

Perhaps a lesser known fact about Kathrine occurred in 1978. With juggling so many projects at once, she came to the realization that she could no longer continue her work and train and compete at high levels. Kathrine made what must have been a soul searching and heart-wrenching decision to let go of her own dreams and pursue a vision much larger than herself — the inclusion of the women's marathon into the Olympic games.

At the time, the criteria for the IOC to even consider a new sport being added to the games was for that sport to be contested in at least 25 countries and 3 continents. With that as the end goal, Kathrine spent the next several years traveling the world, and orchestrating the creation of the Avon International Women's running circuit, which at its peak, encompassed 27 countries in 5 continents, and involved over one million women. In large part, the success of that program ultimately lead to the pinnacle of worldwide acceptance of women into the realm of long distance running with the debut of the women's marathon in the 1984 Los Angles Games.



50th anniversary edition cover of Kathrine Switzer's memoir, Marathon Woman. *(DaCapo Press 2017)*

A mile to go, Motatapu. Switzer with a mile to go in the difficult Motatapu Icebreaker, an all off-road mountain marathon in the South Island of New Zealand. 2010.

Since then, Kathrine has continued to be active right up to the present through writing, advocating, and commentating. Her most recent project is the creation of 2-6-1 FEARLESS; a global supportive community which empowers women to connect and take control of their lives through the freedom gained by running. And yes, she still runs. In April of 2017, just six months ago, Kathrine completed the Boston Marathon once again to commemorate the 50th anniversary of her initial run.

A common phrase which we hear almost daily is, "The whole is always greater than the sum of its parts." This could certainly be said with regard to women running as there is a distinct parallel between the opportunities for women across the board, and how they have risen to every challenge which has been presented to them in the area of long distance running. As one of the most significant trail blazers over the past 50 years, Kathrine will undoubtedly deliver a message that will entertain, inspire, and resonate, as well as bring to light the struggles that go along with social and cultural progress. It will certainly be a message from which we all can benefit. ■