

Published November 10th, 2021

## Orinda resident closes in on record for most consecutive Boston Marathons run by a woman

By Jon Kingdon



Celebration at the Christian Science Plaza at the Reflecting Pool in Boston. Photos provided

Starting in 1985, as regular as clockwork, Orinda resident, former teacher and current nurse, Patty Hung, made an annual trek to Massachusetts to run in the Boston Marathon. Hung's attempt to run in her 35th consecutive Boston Marathon in 2020 did not come about for over two years as the race, like so many other events, was canceled due to the coronavirus.

Though the 2021 Marathon was further postponed from its usual April 19 starting date this year (Patriots Day) to Oct. 11, the 124th Boston Marathon returned to its former glory and for Hung, it was a case of the more things change, the more they stay the same. "The crowds were amazing," Hung said. "It was great to have them out there cheering for us after not being able to do so during the pandemic. It was just like another holiday."

The Boston Athletic Association went the extra mile to ensure the safety of the runners, requiring proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test for every runner prior to being allowed around the other competitors. The race started seven months later than normal to make sure that all the rules and regulations were in place. For the first time, the race was run with a staggered start, further insuring the safety of the runners. All were assigned different colors contingent on their previously established marathon times.

The first group of rated runners to run after the seeded runners was the red group along with the members of the quarter century club (those with 25 Boston Marathons to their credit which included Hung) followed by seven other colors. "Starting out in the red group with so many top runners was fun," Hung said. "We got passed quickly but it was special to start off with the rest of the red group. "Everyone had to wear a mask right up until the race began," Hung said. "Everyone had to wear a mask right up until the gun sounded and the race began," Hung said. "After that we took off our masks and there were baskets for the runners to throw our masks into. Everything was done very efficiently, and it was amazing how safe we all felt."

With over 18,000 people officially entered and 15,374 finishing the race, Hung ended with an official time of 5:34.25. "Conditions for the marathon were excellent," Hung said. "My time wasn't great, but I felt really strong and healthy. My training was very indicative of what I was going to run so I wasn't disappointed. I was a little too comfortable and enjoyed all the festivities because it was so beautiful. I did wear a shirt that was a little too warm. It bothered me at the beginning of the race, but I told myself to put it out of my mind and just run and that is what I did."

Hung's strategy came from the many years of experience along with established traditions developed over the years in running in Boston. "My cousin, as always, prepared a big lasagna dinner and I stopped as I always did half-way through the race to give kisses to my cousin Jackie, Nancy, Hannah and Drew. Hannah is a newscaster for the Hub in Boston and did a story on me and it was fun to see it and feel famous, seeing myself on TV."

As for the race, Hung looked forward, as she always did before to her favorite landmark, the huge CITGO sign that when seen showed her how close she was to finishing the race: "I went out fast and the hills then slowed me down though I still felt strong throughout the race. When I can see the CITGO sign, I know it's the last four miles of the race," Hung said. "When I reached that sign, I knew there was only a mile to go to the finish line. I love to see that sign."

Hung is looking forward to running two more marathons knowing that after the second marathon she will hold the record for the most consecutive marathons run by a woman with 37. This will break the record of 36 by Andrea Hatch who has held the record since 2013. She is also looking forward to running with her sons Eric, who has run four other marathons, and David, who is training to qualify to run with her for the first time next year.

Hung has already laid out her training plan for her 36th marathon: "I am looking to improve my speed and finish the race in under five hours. I may hire a trainer, but I know I can do it. I have the stamina and God willing, I will continue to stay healthy."



Hung's family, from left: Sons Erick and David, Hung, partner Don, and Grandson Gavin. Photos provided

Reach the reporter at: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA