RUNNER'S WORLD 2014

HER

HEROES

HEROES ARE EVERYWHERE. They live in our neighborhoods, run on our streets, work in our schools, even engage us through our smartphones. The achievements and superpowers of the 13 people on the following pages are all different, save for one thing—they are all runners. Because they took a risk or defied the odds or stood up for a cause, the rest of us are better off, and the world is a better place.

THE HUMANITARIAN

WESLEY KORIR

WHEN WESLEY KORIR departed Kenya for a track scholarship in Kentucky in 2003, he resolved never to return. "I remember telling God, 'Hallelujah, I've left the poverty land,'" Korir says. 'I'm going to the land of riches.'"

Over the ensuing decade, Korir found dazzling success in the U.S., setting University of Louisville school records in the 1500 and 5000 meters before winning the Los Angeles Marathon in 2009 and 2010 and the Boston Marathon in 2012 (where he ran 2:12:40 in that year's sweltering heat). But he couldn't shake Kenya from his mind—how women in his village, Biribiriet, walked three miles to a stream to fetch drinking water, and how the dirty water made children sick. How his younger brother, Eliud, had died of a black mamba snakebite—an injury he could have survived if he'd had medical care. A devout Christian, Korir eventually realized, "God has called me to fight poverty in Kenya."

As Korir won races and attained modest wealth, he began pouring his earnings into improving his country. In 2010, along with his Canadian wife, Tarah (who is a 4:40-miler), Korir founded the Kenyan Kids Foundation to provide scholarships for high school students in his native Cherangany District. In 2011, the organization branched into health care, funding the construction of a 10-bed hospital in Biribiriet. When insufficient funds stalled construction, Korir turned to his friend, Ryan Hall, the elite American marathoner, who mobilized his Hall Steps Foundation to raise $33,000 and open the hospital's doors.

Today, Kenyan Kids Foundation provides scholarships to 100 kids and farming aid to five Biribiriet families. International doctors run clinics at the hospital, which Korir dedicated to the memory of his late brother, and the foundation's office in Biribiriet has a small library. Hall is awestruck. "I have never seen another runner help so many people on a daily basis," he says. "Wesley is a servant at heart."

But Korir, 31, is just warming up. Last spring, riding the fame of his 2012 Boston victory, he stepped up his fight against poverty by running for a seat in the Kenyan parliament. In a

PHOTOGRAPH BY **NATHAN PERKEL**

country riven by intense tribal politics, he campaigned as an independent—a brave, almost unprecedented gesture in Kenya—and won. "My first priority is to bring clean water to my district," he says. "If you can get water, you get rid of 80 percent of our diseases." He began by convincing a Louisville nonprofit to bring 20 volunteers to Kenya in November to repair more than 50 broken water pumps scattered throughout the Cherangany, population 195,000. In Parliament, he's trying to raise $1 million to build a network of pipes that will bring clean water to those in the district who don't live near pumps. Despite a relentless work schedule, he's also training—hard. "I have to run fast," he reasons. "If I don't win, the kids I've sponsored will not go to school."

Wesley Korir placed ninth at November's New York City Marathon (in 2:11:34), after skimping on sleep and doing workouts on a treadmill to save time. But his best finishes may still lie ahead of him. "Wesley has a lot to run for in the way of motivation," Hall says of his friend, who hopes to be president of Kenya one day. "And when he lines up on the starting line, all of Kenya is behind him."
—BILL DONAHUE

THE TRAILBLAZER

ARLENE PIEPER

For 50 years, Arlene Pieper had no idea she was a trailblazer in women's running—then came a phone call from a historian. Race organizers from the Pike's Peak Marathon had spent four years trying to track Pieper down. It was 2009, and the 50th anniversary of two milestones: the first woman to run Pike's Peak and the first woman to officially run *any* marathon in the United States, a little-known fact. When Pieper crossed the finish in 1959, she did so seven years before Roberta Gibb and eight years before Kathrine Switzer became icons of the Boston Marathon.

"Back then, women weren't allowed to do much," says Pieper, 83. "I wanted to run the Boston Marathon, but they wouldn't let me. We were just supposed to stay home, bake cookies, and have babies."

Pieper signed up for Pike's Peak at age 29 not to break gender norms but to promote Arlene's Health Studio, the gym she and her husband owned in Colorado Springs. Still, Pieper considers herself one of "the first women's lib women"—in the era of *I Love Lucy*, she ran a fitness center for women and often strolled through town in tight, gold stretch pants and a purple blouse with her husband, "Mr. Arlene," in tow. Her slogan back then: "You can be a wonderful mother and a wonderful wife to your husband, but if there's anything you've wanted to do for yourself, just get out and go for it."

In tennis shoes bought from a dime store, Pieper trained for a year to run the round-trip route from Manitou Springs, Colorado, to the top of 14,115-foot Pike's Peak. She built speed on a local track, her three kids parked in the center with a picnic lunch, and on Sundays ran several miles up the mountain and back.

On race day, Pieper ran with no food, drinking from a stream, her feet rattling around in her cheap shoes, toenails living on borrowed time. She delighted in asking gasping men, "Isn't this a beautiful day for a race?" before blowing past them. When she crossed the finish line in 9:16, Pieper had no idea she would one day be an icon, returning every year to tell her story. She raced for a few more years but never ran another marathon.

After the historian called her, Pieper hung the Pike's Peak Marathon medal around the neck of the 2009 women's winner—a runner who credited her win to Pieper's inspiration. "It's the one thing that I did for myself," says Pieper, "and for all women of the world."
—CAITLIN GIDDINGS

PHOTOGRAPH BY **MARK MAHANEY**

THE FUND-RAISERS

DANNY BENT, KATE TRELEAVEN, JAMIE HAY

THE FRIENDS WERE together in Devon, England, when they heard about the horror of the Boston Marathon bombings on the radio. Danny Bent (34, above left) says, "We looked at each other and said, 'We have to do something.'"

What the British trio did was organize from overseas the 3,300-mile, 2,000-participant One Run for Boston relay. "We did the math—however much money came into that One Fund [the trust set up for victims] was not going to be enough," says Kate Treleaven (34, above center). The relay would raise money through participation fees and donations. Bent and Jamie Hay (23, above right) reached out to U.S. running clubs to spread the word, and Treleaven plotted the route.

The relay began in Venice Beach, Los Angeles, on June 7 and was divided into 319 stages. Solo runners ran about a third of the stages; groups ran the rest.

"It overwhelmed us how much passion people had," Hay says. There was Thomas Hatathli from Tuba City, Arizona, who ran a 26-mile stage through a desolate stretch of Arizona; Gary Allen from Cranberry Isles, Maine, who refused shelter in the support vehicle and ran through a severe thunderstorm in Texas; and Mary Hoatlin from St. Louis, who contacted every runner to confirm they would show up.

At 11:30 p.m. on June 30, 650 runners began the final eight miles from Newton, Massachusetts, to Boylston Street. Two miles out, Nicole Reis, whose first Boston Marathon was halted at mile 25.8, took the baton. Coming up Boylston, she handed the baton to her father, John Odom, who suffered serious leg injuries in the bombings, and pushed him in his wheelchair across the finish line. Then came the celebration as runners reclaimed Boylston Street. The relay had raised $91,390.83 for victims. "We wanted to show our support," Bent says. "This is what runners do: We wake up, and we go for a run." —NICK WELDON

THE GAME CHANGERS

NO SURRENDER RUNNING CLUB

During their training runs, kids in the No Surrender Running Club might talk about school or weekend plans. But they know they can also talk about their friends who've joined gangs or family members who've been deported.

The club began in 2010 after social worker Karen Scranton, 45, read a *Runner's World* story about Back on My Feet, a Philadelphia-based program that helps the homeless start running. Together with her husband, Doug, and friends Pam and Steve Butler—all avid runners—they decided to do something similar in their area. They reached out to kids from the Garfield Park neighborhood of Grand Rapids, Michigan, a high-crime area where more than 70 percent of children live in poverty. With No Surrender, the adults would teach the kids not only how to run, but how to set and achieve their goals.

No Surrender holds three training sessions a year lasting four to 11 weeks, with one to three runs a week. The spring session culminates in the Cereal City Classic 10-K in June; the summer

NEVER GIVE UP
Club founders (below, from left) Pam, Karen, Steve, and Doug; the crew, post-10-miler (right).

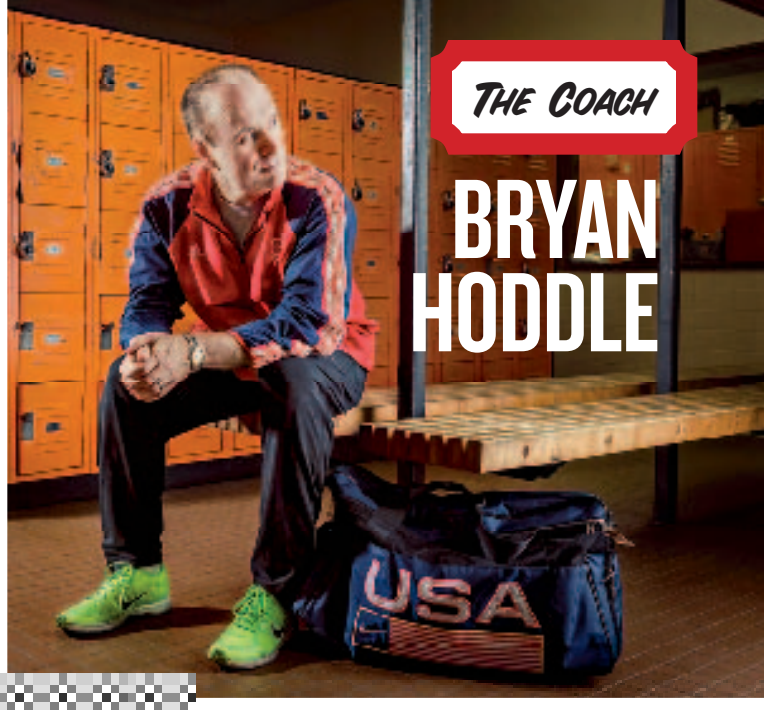
PHOTOGRAPH BY **SAMUEL BRADLEY**

one, with the Bridge Run 10-miler in September. The group tries to pair each child with an adult who helps the kid set and record a workout target in his or her "Goalbook" and accompanies the child on loops around Garfield Park. That's when the kids will often open up about friends or family lost to violence or prison. "The stuff they bring up is pretty deep," Scranton says. "A lot of these kids just crave a positive adult interaction." Afterward, the youngsters record how the run went—at the end of the session, their Goalbooks represent a history of their achievements.

The group uses incentives like running gear (some kids run in jeans) or chaperoned beach trips to reward attendance, and those who complete the 10-miler get $100. "The money helps motivate them to stick with it once we get to the longer training runs in the heat of summer," says Scranton. For many kids, she adds, the money also helps their parents pay the rent.

In the beginning, skeptics told Scranton to aim for a mile race—a 5-K at most. To date, 50 to 60 kids between ages 10 and 17 have participated in the program, and 15 have run the 10-miler. "People give up on these kids too easily, so they give up on themselves," she says. "No Surrender teaches them not to give up. Even when it's hard, you have more in yourself than you think."

Sabrina Lopez, 13, joined No Surrender in February 2012. She's since run two 10-Ks and two 10-milers. She says that running has boosted her speed and endurance in other school sports, and reduced her stress overall. Her family likes the club, too, she says: "They think it's a good idea because it keeps me busy and out of trouble." —MEGHAN G. LOFTUS



THE COACH

BRYAN HODDLE

Bryan Hoddle could see that the burly, 220-pound former soldier didn't trust his prosthetics. In 2011, Steve Martin "ran" leaning back, his stride barely a foot long, his shoulders nearly at his ears and his arms crossing his chest like he was slicing a turkey. Martin couldn't keep his eyes off his carbon-fiber blades—every time they flexed, he was certain they'd shatter. *This is some weird voodoo.*

"They make airplanes out of this stuff," he recalls Hoddle telling him. "You're going to be okay." Hoddle taught Martin—a double below-the-knee amputee, the result of an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan—some stretches to increase his flexibility and drills to improve his balance. "He gave me the confidence to go out and do what I want to do," says Martin, 43, a lifelong runner. At press time, he was on track to finish 11 half-marathons in 12 months.

Hoddle, 55, is a former 400-meter runner, a middle-school teacher in Tenino, Washington, and—for the past 35 years—a running coach. He learned to train amputee athletes in the 1990s when he coached Tony Volpentest—born without hands or feet—to a world record in the 100 meters at the 1996 Paralympic Games in Atlanta. In 2004, fresh off coaching the U.S. Paralympic Track and Field Team to 26 medals in Athens, he went to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center to conduct a running clinic for injured soldiers. "My attitude was, I'm going to dazzle these guys—I'm the head coach," says Hoddle. "First thing I see, a soldier with a bicycle helmet on, stacking blocks like I used to do as a kid. Another soldier in a wheelchair had shrapnel wounds all over his face, missing an arm, missing a leg. Just staring at me." Hoddle excused himself, left the room, and cried.

His mission, he knew, was to give them hope. He began yearly trips to the Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, Alabama, an organization that helps civilians and vets with disabilities and chronic health conditions lead active lives. With drills, stretches, tweaks, and a good ear, he renews their confidence, helping them recover—or discover—the gift of running. He's always on duty—fielding e-mails, texts, and phone calls from vets looking for advice, in-person training, or a confidante. Hoddle estimates he's worked with more than 1,000 soldiers, work he calls "an honor and a privilege."

Eric Keller, 30, suffered a traumatic brain injury in Iraq. Running blunted his anger and depression, and he came to Hoddle at Lakeshore with questions about the Paralympics. After he found himself talking about his stroke, going bankrupt, his crumbled plans for the future—he realized he'd made a friend.

"Bryan gives people something to look forward to," says Keller. "People might not know a disability isn't the end of their life. It's the end of what they knew life to be, but you can have a new definition of good." —CHRISTINE FENNESSY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **EMILIANO GRANADO** (NO SURRENDER CLUB); **HOLLY ANDRES** (HODDLE)

THE PIONEER
MARILYN BEVANS

MARILYN BEVANS FELL IN LOVE with distance running at the wrong time. She discovered her talent for the sport as a kid attending summer camp. But it was the 1960s, a time when women were restricted to races of 800 meters or less and African-Americans were considered sprinters, not distance runners. Bevans watched track meets on TV and dreamed of racing—but it was also the pre–Title IX era, and neither her high school nor her college offered women's track.

So she ran on her own, becoming a familiar figure to members of the Baltimore Road Runners Club. The group was training for the 1973 Maryland Marathon, and invited Bevans to join them. "I was the only black and only female," says Bevans. With their encouragement, she ran the marathon—and her 3:31:45, second-place performance put the self-coached, full-time teacher on track to becoming the first sub-three-hour, world-class, African-American female marathoner.

Over the next 10 years, Bevans ran 22 more marathons. She won three, and placed second in five—including the 1977 Boston Marathon, where she ran 2:51:12. That year, *Track & Field News* ranked her the 10th fastest female marathoner in the world. She ran her PR of 2:49:56 at the 1979 Boston Marathon.

Her success wasn't always recognized. "When some runners ran, there were cheers. When I ran, you heard crickets. I was called the N-word sometimes," she says. "But I have a slow reaction time. If you curse me out now, tomorrow I would get mad. That was a blessing."

She's proud of her legacy, saying, "I'm glad I let women know they could run and be competitive." In November, she was inducted into the National Black Marathoners Association's Distance Runner Hall of Fame.

A coach for more than 30 years, Bevans is currently a head mid-distance "and up" coach at Baltimore's Perry Hall High School. She's twice been named All-Metro Coach of the Year.

"Coaching is like being an artist," she says. "You start with a blank canvas and can end up with a beautiful picture."

—ANTHONY REED

When Nick Symmonds accepted his silver medal at the IAAF World Championships in Russia in August, he surprised the running community by doing exactly what he said he wouldn't do.

Symmonds, 29, had just become the first American in 16 years to medal in the 800 meters at Worlds, and was looking forward to celebrating with a fishing rod and a cold beer or six. But at the risk of arrest, the two-time Olympian used his moment of triumph to speak out against Russia's strict new anti-gay laws—the first international athlete to do so on Russian soil.

His bold dedication of his medal to his "gay and lesbian friends" made global headlines amid proposals of an international boycott of the 2014 Sochi Olympics. The move was classic Symmonds: A self-described opinionated, vocal kid from Idaho, he says he's most proud of doing things his own way.

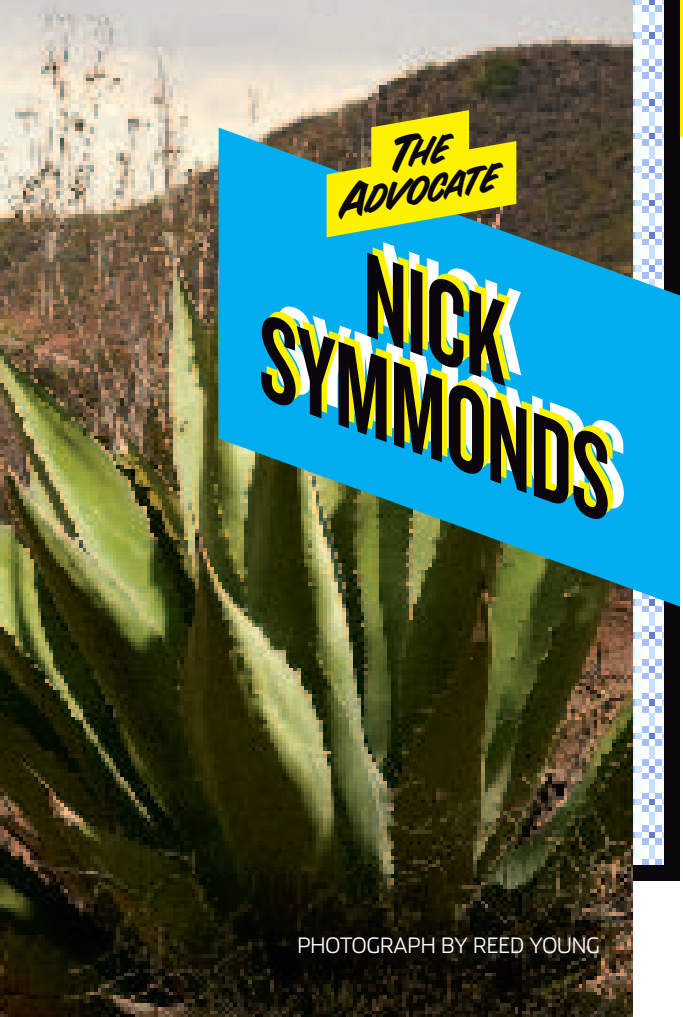
"People laughed at me when I decided to go to a Division III school and not go Division I," says Symmonds, who attended Willamette University. "They laughed when I turned down medical school to chase my dream of running in the

PHOTOGRAPH BY **BRYAN SCHUTMAAT**

Olympics. They laughed when I lost at USAs this year after coming in unprepared. But these tough decisions have taken me to where I am today, and I'm very happy about where that place is."

It's a very good place to be: At the end of 2013, Symmonds holds the year's second-fastest 800-meter time in the world (1:43.03), and in the U.S., his 2012 PR of 1:42.95 makes him the third-fastest 800-meter runner of all time. Despite his success, Symmonds is frustrated with the half-empty stands at championship races. Using traditional and social media as platforms, he's suggested opening up marketing rights and allowing alcohol sales and the placing of bets to make track and field more attractive to today's "attention-deficit culture." His efforts, he says, "have fallen on deaf ears."

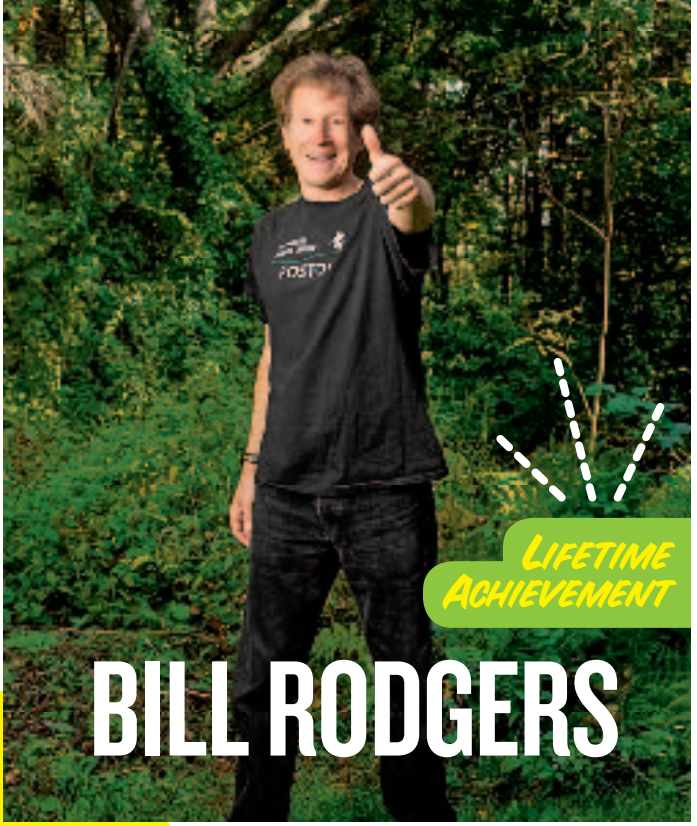
"If we can't put people in seats and convince viewers to watch our races on TV, then we will no longer have a professional sport," Symmonds says. "I want someone who doesn't know anything about track and field to tune in and watch my races just because I'm 'that guy who went on a date with Paris Hilton' [which he did] or I'm 'that guy who has the American Record in the Beer Mile' [which he does: 5:31, four beers]. I don't really care why people watch me race, I just care that they're watching." —C.G.



THE ADVOCATE

NICK SYMMONDS

PHOTOGRAPH BY REED YOUNG



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

BILL RODGERS

BILL RODGERS HAS two nicknames: "King of the Roads" and "Boston Billy." In his prime, the late 1970s and early 1980s, Rodgers won four Boston and four New York City marathons—a record that may never be matched. Runners called him "King of the Roads" because he won races week after week.

But his fans and fellow runners also came to know him as "Boston Billy," the friendly, slightly daft towhead next door. The name came, perhaps, from his unexpected first Boston win in 1975. Almost everyone reacted the same: *Excuse me, but where did you come from?*

I knew the answer. Rodgers and I had roomed together in the late 1960s at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. We ran hundreds of track and road workouts together. People often ask me if I foresaw the "future Bill Rodgers." Oh, sure. I knew that Steve Jobs would invent the iPhone, too.

I did recognize the power in his smooth yet bouncy stride. But he lacked dedication back then. I ran my long runs at 8 a.m. on Sundays—Rodgers, having just returned from the local honky-tonks, couldn't handle that hour. No, I could never have predicted his successes. I'll say this, though: He was way better than me at identifying butterflies in the trees and scooping up $10 bills from the road. Always gazing around in wonder.

Before Rodgers, there was Frank Shorter, with his gold and silver Olympic Marathon medals (gold in 1972, silver in 1976). Over a half-dozen years, the two raced hard against each other. "Bill could transform himself into competitive mode when the gun went off," Shorter recalls. "But as soon as he crossed the finish line, he reverted to a calm, gregarious guy."

Rodgers sees his competitive fire as a flame that rose from disappointments. "I dropped out of my first marathon and periodically out of others," he says. "The bad races fueled the good ones. I could do better, and I wanted to prove it." His best efforts inspired thousands, including a future Olympic Marathon gold-medalist. "When I was eyeing the marathon, Bill's name was synonymous with the Boston Marathon," says Joan Benoit Samuelson, a Boston winner in 1979 and 1983, ahead of her 1984 Olympic victory. "Bill encouraged me—he still does."

At almost 66, Rodgers still runs 40 miles a week, and attends 30 or so races each year. He's traveled 34 times to Davenport, Iowa, home of the Bix 7 road race. There, in the heartland, Rodgers has gained native-son popularity. "He signs autographs and still attracts a long line," says race director Ed Froehlich. "He has such a warm personality. He reaches out to everyone. I can't imagine a better ambassador for the sport."

I believe this will be seen as Bill Rodgers's greatest contribution to road running. Champion athletes come and go, but he has remained a king with a commoner's touch. We couldn't ask for more. —AMBY BURFOOT

PHOTOGRAPH BY **NOAH KALINA**

Credit by DUMMY NAME; Credit by DUMMY NAME