



Fall 11-1-2006

Students Complete Chicago Marathon

Sarah Zellar
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Zellar, Sarah, "Students Complete Chicago Marathon" (2006). *News and Events*. 3312.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/3312>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Students Complete Chicago Marathon

Nov. 1, 2006

Among the mass of runners who competed in the La Salle Bank Chicago Marathon on Sunday, Oct. 22, were three faces familiar to members of the Illinois Wesleyan community.

Senior Courtney Holden and first-year students Jessica and Shannon Lancaster all finished the 26.2 mile-long race, held on a blustery day with light rain, strong winds from the west and temperatures in the low 40s.

Holden — who is an English major and a graduate of Hononegah Community High School in Roscoe, Ill. — finished the race in 4 hours, 5 minutes, 54 seconds — placing her 12,972th among the 40,000 runners competing. While her moment at the finish line was satisfying, even better was knowing that she was successful in her goal to raise money for cancer research.

Holden decided to register for the marathon through a charity as a fundraiser. “I chose the American Cancer Society because both my mom and grandma passed away from ovarian cancer,” she said. In order to run the race, Holden had to raise at least \$1,200 through donations on the organization’s Web site — a goal she has exceeded.

Identical twin sisters Jessica and Shannon Lancaster ran the marathon with their mother. The sisters, who are from Olympia Fields, Ill., competed in cross-country races at Marian Catholic High School, but had never run a marathon before. Jessica crossed the finish line in 27,405th place, with her sister and mother right behind her.

With that many runners the place didn’t matter,” Jessica said. “It was just the satisfaction of saying that you did, in fact, cross the finish line.”

“It is definitely easier to compete with other people. It’s more fun,” Shannon said.

All three students say they enjoyed the spectacle of the marathon, which is among the world’s largest athletic events.

“The whole atmosphere is just awesome,” said Holden, “with over one million spectators and everyone cheering.” Despite the cold, rain and occasional sleet, Holden said the under-armor and pants she was wearing kept her warm enough. However, she was surprised to see some of the runners wearing tank tops and shorts.

“You see people running in all different kinds of stuff,” said Holden. “I saw people dressed up as Thing One and Thing Two [from Dr. Seuss] and two guys running in business suits.”

For Shannon Lancaster, the most memorable moment of the race was the start: “We were packed shoulder to shoulder with people, and if you looked up you could see clothes just flying through the air from people who were taking off their top layers already. One pair of warm-up pants was timed nicely with the cymbals in the National Anthem.”

Jessica Lancaster observed that “there is a definite ‘traffic patterns’ to the runners. Everyone’s going about the same speed in the same direction. You get the occasional lunatic who comes sprinting up the curb, or cuts someone off without looking over their shoulder, but for the most part the traffic’s flowing without too many problems.” But that all changes as the runner’s pass one of the water stations set up along the 26-mile route. “People go left, right, backwards, sudden stops and high speeds to make up the pace.”

All three IWU students trained extensively for the marathon. Holden had the most experience, having run the Chicago Marathon last year, as well.

“The longest training you do is for 20 miles,” she said. In the 26.2-mile race, “for the last six miles, it’s like ‘good luck!’

“It got tough around mile 22 or 23, but I never felt like there was a time when I thought I wouldn’t finish. I wouldn’t want to let all the people down who donated money. While I was running, it was cool to think, ‘Hey, I’m running this for my mom.’”

To stay in shape, “I do two hours of cardio every day,” Holden said. On a typical day, she might jog in the morning, jump rope after class, and then attend an exercise class in the evening.

And after the Sunday race, Holden still managed to make it to class on Monday. “Nautilus fitness was my first class on Monday morning,” she said. Although she was a little sore, “I felt good. I made it.”

Holden realizes her flexible schedule won’t last forever, and her plans for next year’s marathon are still undecided. “Right now, I don’t have a structured schedule. I can work out for two hours a day,” she said. She’ll consider running half marathons in the future, “as the amount of time I have diminishes.”

For the Lancaster sisters, the idea of attempting a marathon has intrigued them since their high school cross-country experience. Last year, they volunteered to help out at one of the marathon’s water stations, “and that drove the idea home,” says Jessica.

“Our mom jumped on the bandwagon shortly after that; she had started running during our freshman year of high school, and she liked the idea, too.” Running together made the task much easier for all three, Jessica added. “We wanted to get out there, run the distance and enjoy ourselves. With that kind of an approach it is much easier to have a group of supportive people around you, whether running or spectating. Long runs during training — which our mom drove down here for — are also a good time to catch up on what’s going on at home.”



Courtney Holden competed in the Chicago Marathon.