

The Manchester Historical Society

SPORTS NEWS

McCluskey Family Chooses Manchester As Site of Joe McCluskey's Trophies

Joe Won Four Manchester Road Races. His Road Race Trophies On Display at History Center During November.

By Susan Barlow, Manchester Historical Society
Manchester, November 2007 – The Manchester Historical Society is pleased to announce a generous donation by the family of Manchester native and Olympian Joe McCluskey (1911-2002). The collection includes records of Joe's successes, medals, photos, and diaries that document the story of a youngster from Manchester who made his way to the Track and Field Hall of Fame. Athlete, coach, family man and Navy veteran, Joe was famous for his drive, his good nature, his smile, and his love of his hometown.

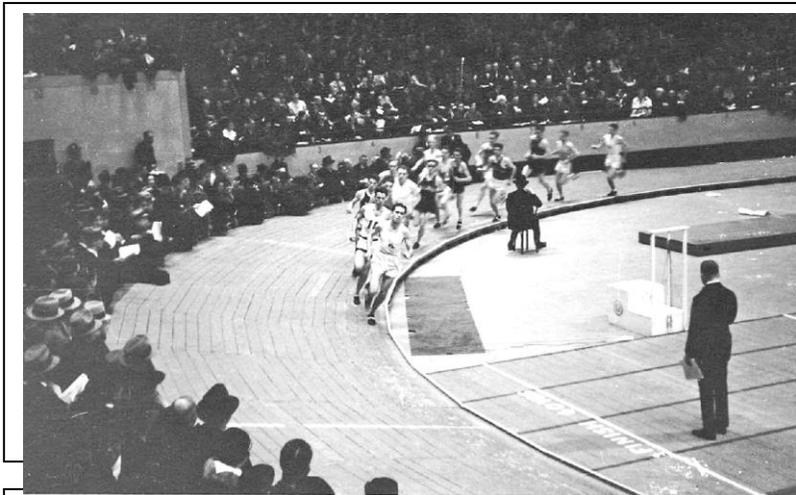
The collection is in the process of being catalogued, and will eventually be on display. Copies will be made of the newspaper clippings and other documents, and these archives will eventually be available for researchers. Some of the photos have been digitized (see below), and a book about Joe is in the works.

Joe trained with Coach Pete Wigren at Manchester High School, ran at Fordham

University in New York, won a bronze medal in the 1932 Olympics, and coached at the N.Y. Athletic Club. He won 25 national titles in distance events, capturing the steeplechase title a record nine times between 1930 and 1943.

It was Joe's older brother, John (1909-2009), who won the very first Manchester Road Race, a Thanksgiving Day event that began in 1927, before Joe was old enough to run. Joe went on to set records in 1930, 1931 and 1932, and 15 years later made a stunning comeback, winning the race at age of 36 – the oldest man ever to win. According to the late Earl Yost, *Manchester Herald* sports editor, "McCluskey valued the win as much as his national championships and three selections on the United States Olympic team." Other sportswriters called Joe "the all-time track great," "the distance sensation," and "the outstanding runner of the East." Joe was instrumental in reviving the Road Race after its hiatus from 1935 to 1944 – by bringing his world-class running to the race, he attracted other track stars.

The Town of Manchester and the Historical Society are grateful to the McCluskey family for this important collection. Questions may be directed to Dave Smith, the curator of the Historical Society, at 860-647-9742.



Above: Joe out in front at an indoor relay race.

Right: Barnard School basketball team, 1925. That's Joe, middle left, with an "X" below his necktie.

