

TANK McNAMARA

by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds



'Born to run' not a cliché for Ag track hall of famer

By **CHRISTI DAUGHERTY**
Reporter

When Linda Waltman was in third grade she played chase with the other children on the playground. That's when Waltman discovered how much she loved to run. And running hasn't let her down since.

Running would take her to competitions all over the United States. Running would put her through college. Running would help her meet her husband.

Through her love and ability for running, Waltman recently became the first woman ever to be inducted into the Texas A&M Athletic Hall of Fame — or into any other Southwest Conference school's hall for that matter.

She will be formally inducted during a halftime ceremony at the A&M-Arkansas football game, Nov. 16.

Waltman, 28, is a tall blond, born and raised in Fort Worth. Today, she is the superintendent of the College Station Parks and Recreation Department.

She holds her one month-old daughter, Haley, in her arms throughout the interview. Her first child, Jenny, is 2-years-old.

Waltman says her parents still live in the same white, two-bedroom house in Fort Worth, where they've lived all her life.

In the mid '70s, when she was attending Fort Worth Paschal High School, her name was Linda Cornelius and her father, Howard, was her running coach.

Paschal High didn't have girls' track team until Waltman's junior year, so her father coached her until it finally got one.

"Even after we had a team, dad would come to every practice," Waltman says.

Once she started running on Paschal's team, Waltman began setting records. She's still the only woman to be the voted Most Valuable High School Athlete during the SWC Indoor Track and Field Championships in Fort Worth in 1975.

Waltman's family supported her track efforts and intended for her to attend college, despite the cost involved.

"I never felt like I was poor because I never hurt for anything," Waltman says, "but I know we didn't have much money because they're (her parents) working class people."

Waltman's father still works for General Motors in Fort Worth. "He can retire any day," she says. And her mother works for Justin Boot Company.

When A&M offered to make her the first woman ever to receive a full athletic scholarship to a SWC school, Waltman jumped. "uh... ran at the opportunity."

Her husband, Robert Waltman, played football at A&M for two years. When he met Linda Cornelius through a mutual friend, he decided to coach her part-time.

"He was on a full academic scholarship and I was on a full athletic scholarship, so it really worked out well," she says.

Linda and Robert married in the summer of 1978. He continued working on his law degree and coached her, while she worked toward the 1980 Olympics and set several A&M records, such as her 19½-foot long jump, which has yet to be broken.

In 1980, Waltman and her husband set off to Northern California and later to Eugene, Ore., where the '80 Summer Olympic Trials were being held.

Unfortunately, Waltman made the team former President Jimmy Carter had decided shouldn't attend the Moscow Games to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.

She, and the other athletes during that boycotted year, would go only as far as the White House to be awarded "honorary" gold medals. She speaks bitterly of the politics/sports mix in '80 that crushed her Olympic dreams.

"I got back home (from Washington D.C.), a few months went by and I thought, 'That was it? All that time I ran — since the third grade — and that's it?'" she says.

Waltman says it was terribly depressing to watch the Moscow Games' opening and closing ceremonies on television. She thought she should be there.

"That was tough, but you know, when they had the games in L.A. (in 1984), I think it was worse," she says. "I bawled my eyes out when they held the closing ceremonies (in L.A.), when they extinguished the flame."

In the fall of '80, she and her husband moved to Lubbock where she began working as a teacher and a track coach. She started to train for the upcoming indoor track season, but says she discovered that her heart just wasn't in it anymore.

It was then she decided to give up her track career for good and concentrate on teaching. She taught for two years in Lubbock and one in Arlington, but she didn't like it.

"Basically I didn't enjoy teaching at all," she says. "It's just not for me." So now that she is back in College Station and working for the parks and recreation department and starting a family, she says she is doing something that she enjoys.

Waltman's formal induction into the A&M hall of fame in a few weeks will be the proverbial "icing on the cake."

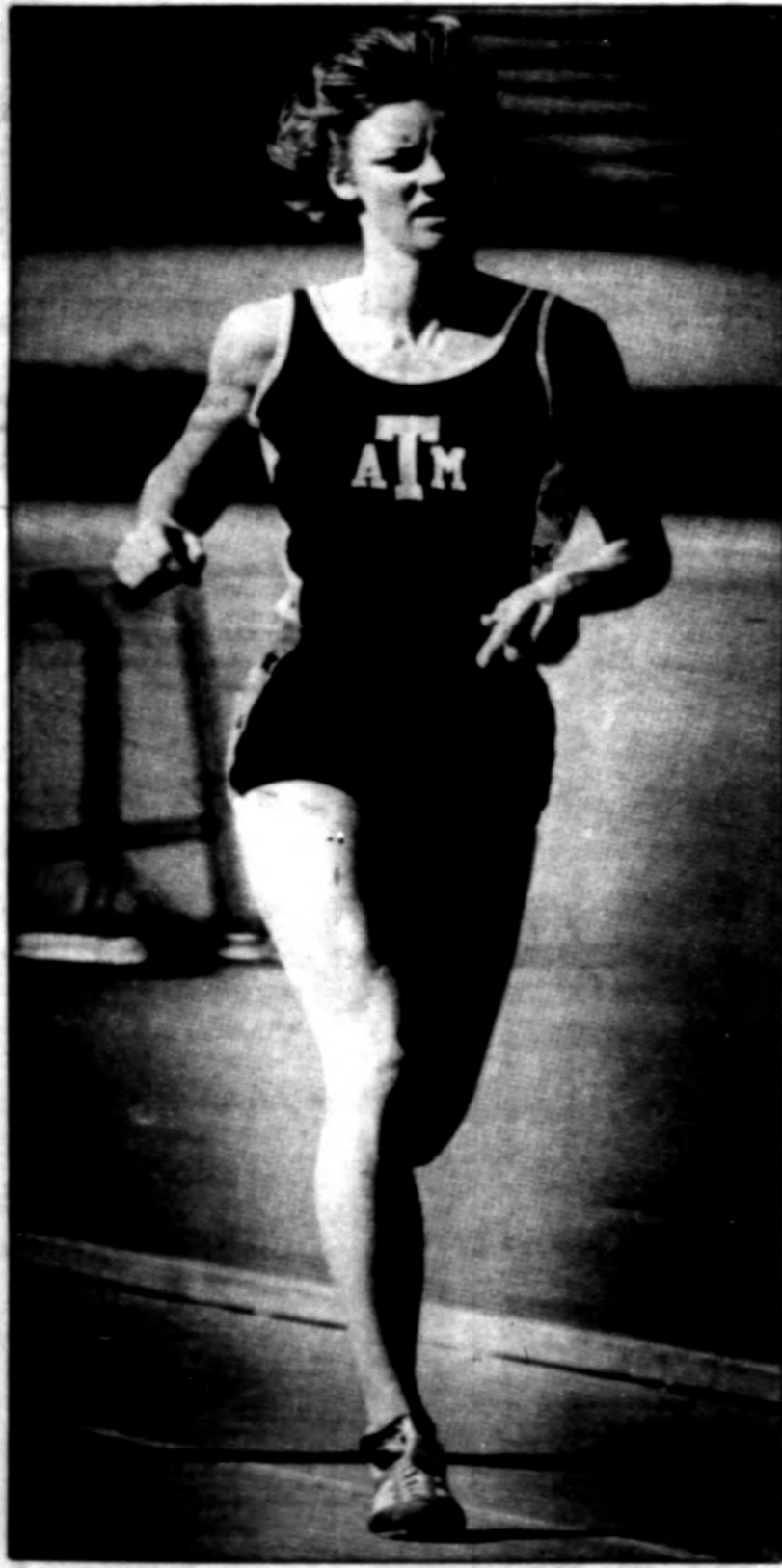


Photo Courtesy of The AggieLand

Linda Waltman (above), a Texas A&M track star from '76-79, is the first woman inductee to a Southwest Conference hall of fame.

1/2 OFF ALL YOU CAN EAT! 1/2 OFF

Buy one buffet at regular price and get a second meal for **HALF PRICE** with this coupon.

Mongolian Bar B-Q & Chinese Food Buffet

Lunch \$5.45
Dinner \$7.45

MONGOLIAN HOUSE RESTAURANT

1503 S. Texas at Holiday Inn College Station

Not to be used with other offers
Exp 10/31/85

Beautiful Roses
(Red, pink, yellow)
from
The Dixie Rose Company

\$4⁰⁰ per dozen
Buy one dozen get second dozen for 1/2 price

To Order Call 693-2749 before Friday

Roses will be available for pick-up from 3:00-7:00 p.m. Friday, October 11 in front of Sbis Dining Hall and in front of Commons.

sponsored by **ENVE**

MSC POLITICAL FORUM

THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY

"PALESTINIANS AND THEIR ROLE IN A NEW ARAB WORLD"

FEATURING **HATEM HUSSAINI**
FORMER PLO AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N.

TUES. 8:00pm
OCT. 15 RUDDER THEATER FREE

Memorial Student Center

BACK YOUR CLASSMATES

Wave on the **THE TEXAS A&M 12TH MAN** Team

Get your 12th MAN Towel before the next home game...

On sale Wed. through Sat. at the MSC

Sponsored by Athletic Hostesses

hastings
records-tapes-video

free beer!

Culpepper Plaza

happy hour
friday 2-6

movie rental over 2,000 titles \$1.99	all \$8.69 list cassettes or LP's 2 for \$13	bestseller books 25% off
--	---	------------------------------------

Open: Mon. - Thurs., 10-10 Fri. & Sat., 10-11 Sun. 12-10
1631 Texas Ave., College Station 693-2619

1¢ BURRITO SUPREME 1¢

1¢

WITH PURCHASE OF ONE AT REGULAR PRICE. GOOD THRU OCTOBER 16, 1985.

TACO BELL

Limit one coupon per person per visit. 11 am - 11 pm. Not good with any other offer. Valid only at Bryan/College Station TACO BELL® Restaurants.