

## JULIE BROWN, WORLD CHAMPION

Julie Brown graduated from Billings Senior High School in 1973. She was a three-time state champion in the 880-yard run, '71, '72, and '73. At the 1973 Girls State Track and Field Championships at Dornblaser Stadium, Missoula, "Julie Brown's track fame spread nationwide Saturday afternoon as the Billings Senior standout ran the 880 in 2:11. It's the best high school time in the nation since 1971. The world record is 2:02. She won by 80 yards without using a finishing kick. Her 440 time was 57.9 which shattered the state record." (The Billings Gazette May 27, 1973.)

Less than two months after the state track meet, then running for the Timberettes AAU team coached by Neil Eliason of Kalispell, she broke the national high school 800-meter record with a time of 2:08.2 at Irvine, California. Following this performance, she became a member of the Junior National AAU team and traveled to, and, competed in Russia, Germany, and Poland.

Prior to her 1973 track season she was the 1972 Montana Girls Cross-Country champion with a time of 8:16.05 for the 1.5 mile run at Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course in Helena. During the season she trained by running around Pioneer Park up to 15 miles a day, starting at 6 a.m. for a few miles and then after school for a few more. And during the winter months she ran the hallways of Billings Senior High.

Billings Senior coach Phyllis Miller, the cross country and track coach for Julie thought her strengths were the 440-yard dash and the 880-yard run. But during the next ten years of competitions Julie excelled at each race from 800 meters through the marathon: a rare ability.

In the fall of 1973, she chose to attend UCLA and become the first woman to receive an athletic scholarship in cross-country, and track and field from this university.

At the 1974 AIAW National Championship in Denton, Texas, three UCLA runners finished first, second, and third in the two-mile run (Larrieu, Julie Brown and Choate). At the same meet, Larrieu and Julie held hands crossing the finish line of the mile run, going first and second with a time of 4:59.4

Women's track and field at UCLA have had five-triple qualifiers go to the national track and field finals. Francie Larrieu Smith 1974, Julie Brown 1975, Kate Keyes 1975, Jackie Joyner Kersee in the mid 1980's and over thirty years later, May of 2018, Alyssa Wilson in the field events.

In 1975 competing for the USA, Julie became a world champion at the age of 20 running at the Women's World Cross-Country championships at Rabat, Morocco (only three American women have earned this award). One week later she set a world record in the 10,000-meter run. In May of '75 at Eugene, OR for the AIAW National Championships Julie earned 28 points of the 89 total points for UCLA which won the team title.

The NCAA replaced the AIAW in the '80's. (National Collegiate Athletic Association, Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women)

A 1978 article by Bill Schneider in his column The Human Race dated September 21, 1978 with the headline, Montana's Best is America's Best: "Julie Brown, 23, a Billings native, recently broke the American women's marathon record running a 2:36:23 at the Nike-Oregon

Track Club Marathon.” Julie Brown participated in the 1979 Pan American Games held in San Juan, Puerto Rico winning the silver medal in the: 800 meters, the 1500 meters, and the 3000 meters. Julie competed in the 1980 Olympic Trials at Eugene, Oregon and qualified for the Moscow Summer Olympics in the 800 meter and the 1500 meter. (The USA did not participate in the Moscow Olympics.)

Julie was inducted into the MHSAA Athlete’s Hall of Fame in 1994 (Montana High School Association). Her personal best times: 400 meters, 1977, 55.94; 800 meters, 1977, 2:00.8; 1500 meters, 1979, 4:06.4; the mile run, 1980, 4:30.3; 5,000 meters, 1984, 15:30.50; marathon, 1983, 2:26:24. She won 14 national titles, and ran on 20 U. S. international teams. She was the 1977 Broderick Award winner (now called the Honda award) for Outstanding Athlete in track and cross country.

Julie is listed as the number eight runner of the top twenty of American women runners through the year 2000 in Marc Blooms Run with the Champions.

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