

The Striders Awards Banquet 2024

Forty-seven Striders and family members gathered November 2nd at Paul Martin's American Grill at the Irvine Spectrum Center for the annual awards banquet. So many attended that we almost ran out of room. After socializing and enjoying our lunch, we got down to the business of honoring various team members for their accomplishments in 2024.

Teammate of the Year was awarded to Jeanne Bowman, our vice-president. Jeanne arranges hotel accommodations for us at nationals and arranges the team dinner at that meet as well. She's the one who pulls us together into relay teams and makes all the arrangements for our annual banquet.

Our treasurer, Suzette Lee, earned the Sportsmanship award, recognizing her fairness, civility, honesty, respect, and responsibility. These aspects are abundant in her handling of the team's finances as well as her work as the meet director for the Striders Meet of Champions. Beyond those responsibilities, she's a great ambassador for the Striders in her going to meets all over our nation, working on competing in every state senior games as well as other meets.

Donna Beard is our Rookie of the Year. Though she's certainly not a rookie in masters track and field, she is a new member of the Striders. She competes in throws, sprints, and jumps and is highly ranked in all. At the Las Vegas senior games meet in October she set a new world record in the throws pentathlon (4221 points). We hope that her mark in the same event at a meet in Canada is soon made official—it's even better!

The Leadership Recognition award was presented to Linda Cohn for her effective communication, fostering of collaboration, and other aspects of excellent leadership, but with a specific emphasis on her ability to guide our board through changes and to contribute to the board's and team's overall success.

Ron Stevens is the Outstanding Male Athlete of the Year. He set an American record in the M 70 300 meter hurdles (49.04) at nationals. Besides winning that race, he was second in the 100 and 80 meter hurdles at that meet as well. He was a good sport in running on the first-place 4x400 relay. At the world championships this year in Gothenburg, Sweden, he won the 100, was second in the 200 and 300 meter hurdles, and finished third in the 80 meter hurdles. He was the anchor of the American gold-medal winning, world record setting 4x100 relay (51.12).

Kathy Bergen was awarded the Outstanding Female Athlete of the Year (yet again!). Though she was at the older end of her age group this year, she was still ranked number one in the United States W80 in the 50, 100, high jump, discus, and javelin and number three in the 200 (not her favorite event).

The 4x400 men's relay team of Jeff McDermott, Ron Benudiz, Ron Stevens, and Lloyd Hightower was honored for winning gold at nationals. It's been quite a number of years since the Striders fielded a men's 4x400!

Those who set American and world records were also highlighted:

American record: Ron Stevens, M 70, 300 meter hurdles

American and world record: Donna Beard, W 60, throws pentathlon

American record: W70 4x100 relay team—Linda Cohn, Kathy Bergen, Jeanne Bowman, Tina Bowman. The other Striders' W 70 4x100 relay team also broke the American record—Joy Flynn, Brenda Matthews, Carole Jackson, Rita Hanscom