



Terry Fox ran to raise money for cancer research but was felled by the disease that eventually killed him.

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# Following In His Footsteps

## 25 Years Later, Running the Race Started by Terry Fox

By DOUG STRUCK  
Washington Post Foreign Service

TORONTO — On a bitterly cold day in April 1980, a young man named Terry Fox touched the Atlantic Ocean on Canada's east coast, turned to the west and started running.

He was 21, with a nest of curly hair and a boy-next-door smile that would enchant photographers' cameras. He set off with a gait painful to watch. Two skips on his good left leg, followed by one stride on the metal pole where his right leg used to be.

His plan was audacious: to run across Canada — 5,300 miles — at the pace of a marathon a day, every day, to raise money to combat cancer like that which had claimed his leg.

Terry Fox ran his way into the hearts of Canadians with an astonishing physical effort. On the way, he became a hero and created a legend that is still growing here and spreading around the globe.

Every year, schools throughout Canada hold running events to raise money for cancer research. This fall, on the 25th anniversary of his run, organizers are counting on millions of children to run at the same time in what is being billed as the country's largest mass event.

Terry Fox Runs were made last year by 2.2 million people in more than 50 countries, in cities as diverse as Sydney and Zagreb, Kabul and Caracas. Nearly one in five Cubans ran "for" Terry Fox — in the phrase used in the events — last year. There is a 5K fun run in Washington on Sept. 17, starting in Georgetown.

See FOX, C8, Col. 1

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## A Legend That Still Traverses Canada

FOX, From C1

His story remains an emotional touchstone for many. Schoolchildren run in the annual fundraisers wearing a badge with the name of someone they know — too often a grandparent, friend or relative — who has cancer or died of it. A Terry Fox documentary prompts tears when it is shown at civic events here every year.

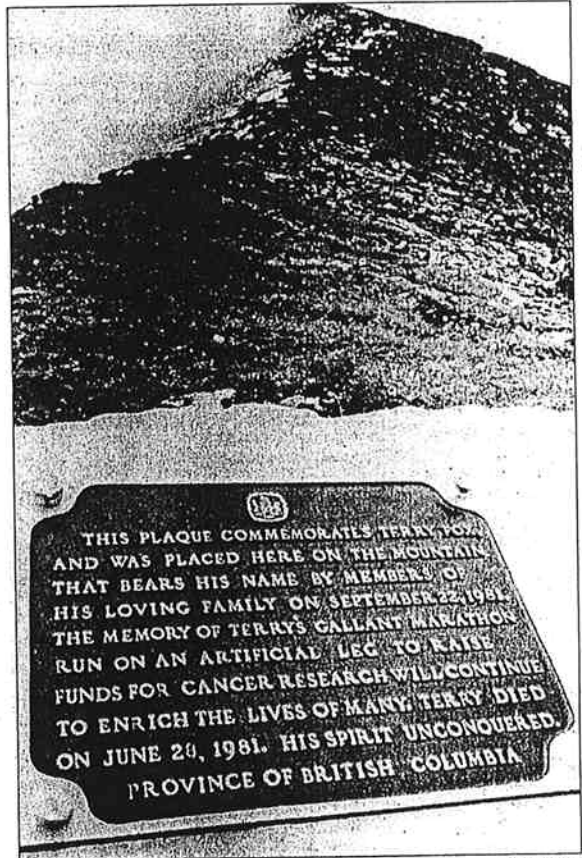
Last week, at the kind of official ceremony over which he has presided hundreds of times, Toronto Mayor David Miller broke down on the podium as he talked of the effect of Terry Fox. His own mother died four years ago of cancer, the mayor said, and the story of the stubborn, one-legged runner plowing through his pain and isolation was a constant reminder of the toll of the disease.

"His story is amazing. It always affected me," Miller explained later.

Fox, a freckle-faced kid from a working-class family near Vancouver, hustled his way onto high school sports teams. In March 1977, what he thought was a minor sports pain in his knee grew until he collapsed. X-rays showed bone cancer — osteosarcoma. A few days later, his right leg was amputated six inches above the knee and he began 16 months of chemotherapy. He was 18.

His former basketball coach visited Fox's bedside and showed him a story about Dick Traum, an amputee who had run in the New York City Marathon. The idea of taking on an athletic challenge stuck, Fox later said. After his therapy, he began training with the same gritty determination that had won him a spot as the shortest guard on the basketball team.

After he ran his first long-distance race — coming in last as the other runners cheered at the finish line — Fox came home and announced his plan to his mother, Betty. Eight months later, Fox was in St. John's, Newfoundland, with his best friend, Doug Alward, to start his "Marathon of Hope." They had a camper van donated by Ford, running shoes from Adidas, and



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A plaque at Mount Terry Fox in British Columbia, one of many sites named for the fundraising runner, at left, after his death from cancer in 1981.

With one lung collapsing, Fox was flown home on a small jet. As the pictures of him being loaded on a stretcher dominated the newscasts, tears flowed across Canada.

"I thought this was an invincible human being who could accomplish anything," Darrell Fox said. "It never entered my mind that he wouldn't make it."

A week after Terry Fox stopped running, the CTV network staged a hastily arranged cancer fundraiser in his name. Stars such as Elton John, Gordon Lightfoot, Glen Campbell and John Denver lined up outside the studio.

They raised \$8.5 million in a day for cancer research. Fox watched from his hospital bed. Ten months later, he was dead.

There was an avalanche of run-athons, sew-athons, even strip-athons to raise money in Fox's honor. Sharp put his hotel chain to work to

tists said was impossible," said Isadore Sharp, the millionaire president of the Four Seasons Hotel chain, who had lost a 19-year-old son to cancer and became a key promoter of Fox's run. "He ran 26 miles a day, for 143 days: 3,339 miles on one leg. They say no body can stand up to that abuse. But he did it."

By the time the team reached Ontario, 1,880 miles into the run, it was summer, hot and muggy, but