



ON AUGUST 2, 2025, 200 former athletes and “Mills” fans gathered in the Estabrook Beer Garden to congratulate Mike “Mills” Miller on his 44 years of coaching track and cross country in this community at both high schools.

Hosted by Arden Stewart, former athlete, long-time assistant coach, and now head high school coach – the party overflowed with former athletes and families, current athletes and families, and coaches from across the area coming to celebrate his legacy. Mike beamed for four straight hours reconnecting with those who meant so much to him.

In addition to his years coaching at Whitefish Bay High School from 1990 to 2025, Mike also coached cross country and track at Dominican High School from 1981 to 1990. And, he was elected to the Wisconsin Coaches Cross Country Hall of Fame.

“I also enjoyed a party with the runners I coached at Dominican High School at Pizza Man,” Mike says. “Both parties were very emotional for me. Lots of great kids and memories.”

Mike “Mills” Miller

Retires from High School Coaching

POSITIVELY IMPACTING
RUNNERS’ SKILLS AND
THEIR LIVES FOR 44 YEARS

*“Mills taught me and all of his athletes how to lead by example, instill daily discipline, and care for everyone involved. He’s the type of coach who goes beyond running – **he has a unique ability to shape lives and uncover purpose.**”*

NATE GOMOLL, CLASS OF 2013

Mike's family and career

A Whitefish Bay resident for 45 years, Mike and his wife, Sue (also his assistant coach), have enjoyed a 45-year marriage after meeting on Milwaukee's east side during their college years. Today, they share their lives with four children: Nick, Melissa, Molly, and McKenzie - who all graduated from Whitefish Bay High School - plus Cannoli (6), their tuxedo cat.

Mike went to college at MATC for photography and design. "For 35 years, I worked at Northwestern Mutual and retired in 2016 as the chief company photographer," explains Mike. "At that time, I started my own commercial photography business called Mike Miller Images that continues today."

Where his running story began

Mike says he started running at Milwaukee's Thomas Moore High School in 1973. "I was blessed with having a Hall of Fame Coach, Norb Wishowski. We became WISAA State Champions in my senior year. I wove in Norb's coaching traditions into the runner programs at Dominican and Bay."

"Mills made me feel seen. No one took an interest in me like Mills. He made me want to compete, train hard, and contribute to the team. Being captain was an honor, and he'd expect you to set a good example. He treated you like an adult, listened to your input/feedback, and expected a lot in return. The community he created was nothing short of spectacular. I found my home and my lifeblood in CC and track. Added bonus, I met my stunning and super-fast wife in the crew."

PATRICK ROETS, CLASS OF 2001

Mike also ran with a team at MATC, a group of very talented people. "After college, it was road races for me," explains Mike. "Al's Run, Bastille Days, The Northwestern Mutual Roots and Wings Race, which I won twice. And I ran both the Chicago and Boston Marathons." He's still running today several times a week, but much slower, he says.

His decades-long coaching career

Mike's coaching career began in 1981 after a coaching friend asked him to join his staff.

For Mike, coaching was a constant learning curve - challenging himself to learn the latest and greatest training techniques and always surrounding himself with great assistants.

"I would never have retired unless my top assistants, Arden Stewart and Steve Markson, hadn't taken over the program," adds Mike. "I was blessed with the opportunity to coach them both in high school. Steve's in the Whitefish Bay Hall of Fame. And both Arden and Steve were on state-championship teams as runners. I know some of the traditions that built the program will continue, along with new and improved ones."

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"He knew everyone's goals and set them up physiologically to be able to achieve those goals. That's the passion for the sport – knowing the science. But he also had compassion. His instinct was to care genuinely and intensely about each human on the team. He wanted to help runners strive, but even more so, he wanted them to feel a part of something bigger than themselves. His heart was always with those kids. He laughed with them, had difficult conversations with them, and left them with important lessons after four years."

CANDACE COSTA, COACHED WITH MILLS FROM 2003-2013

*"Mills was a true leader and supporter of each athlete on the roster. From the first day of practice at Midnight Madness, when the entire team spent the night in the gym meeting one another and kicking off the cross-country season with a run on the track at midnight – followed by a Krispy Kreme and chocolate milk mile – Mills established an environment that **encouraged teamwork, fun, and incremental growth.**"*

MEGAN PALMER, CLASS OF 2010

Filling Mike's running shoes – Arden Stewart

Arden first met Mills in 2000 when her oldest brother, Ben, joined the cross-country team at Whitefish Bay High School. "I watched in awe at the fun and success the teams had as my brothers ran for Mills' team," says Arden. "At long last, it was my chance to join, and I spent four years, eight seasons between cross country and track, with him as my coach."

After moving back to the area in her 20s, Arden reached out to see if she could help Mills on the coaching side. "After leaving the Bay for college and initial jobs, I ultimately moved back, and upon closing on a home here, I texted Mills asking if he needed an assistant coach. He simply responded, "You're hired!"

Arden shares that it's been a joy! "Mike's a gentle but strong leader, and he cared so passionately about the teams he coached. With his retirement, I've taken on the daunting task of continuing the tradition of success he built, as I step in as head coach. He's an absolute legend in the coaching world and created such a rich, tradition-filled culture for the hundreds of athletes who called him 'Mills.'"

Arden feels that taking over after Mills is daunting, but she's thrilled to have Steve as the associate head coach. "He's a dear friend, an incredible student of the sport, and a remarkable coach," she says.



COACH MIKE MILLER'S WINNING RECORD

TRACK AND FIELD

WHITEFISH BAY DOMINICAN 1981-1990

- Girls: 2nd place WISAA State Champions 1983
- Girls: 1st place WISAA State Champions 1984
- Girls: 2nd place WISAA State Champions 1985

WHITEFISH BAY HIGH SCHOOL 1990-2025

TEAM CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS CROSS COUNTRY

- Boys: 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2011, 2018, 2019 (7 times)
- Girls: 1997-1998, 2000-2021 (24 times)

CROSS COUNTRY TEAM STATE QUALIFIERS WIAA DIV 1

- Girls: 1997-2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024 (26 times), 3rd all-time in state history; 23 top-10 finishes; 11 top-5 finishes
- Boys: 1996, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2017, 2018, 2020 (10 times)

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND RUNNERS-UP

- Boys: 2005 (Champions)
- Girls: 2007 Second Place, 2008 (Champions), 2009-2nd, 2014-2nd, 2020-2nd

STATE TRACK CHAMPIONS

- Boys: 4x800 - 2005, 2006 (state record)
- Girls: 4x800 - 2015
- Steve Markson - 800 2-time State Champion
- Cami Davre - 800- 4-time state Champion (state record), 1600-4-time State Champion, 3200 State Champion
- Megan Palmer - 800
- Kenzie Vicker - 3200

SCHOOL RECORD HOLDERS

- Boys: 800, 4x800
- Girls: 800, 1600, 3200, 4x800




*"Coach Mills may be known as a very experienced and accomplished coach, but what goes unnoticed to most people is how he **cares for his athletes so much on a personal level.** He's made an incredible positive impact on my life."*

JACOB JONES, CLASS OF 2025

*"Our cross-country days were formative parts of our lives, and we have Mills to thank for bringing us together. He was everything you'd want a coach to be: encouraging, caring, motivating, and supportive. Mills cared about each of his runners, which is evident by not just his workouts and training plans, but also his emphasis on the mental side of the sport. **We're all lucky to have known him, not just as our coach, but as our friend!**"*

JAIMELYN KOST, CLASS OF 2001

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Steve Markson – current assistant coach

Steve graduated from Whitefish Bay High School in 2006. A competitive runner since the sixth grade, Steve landed on Mills' team.

Then, after moving back to Milwaukee, Steve began coaching in 2020. "I obviously knew the school and community well and wanted a chance to coach alongside Mills," explains Steve. "As a runner, he consistently pushed our group to be successful. We had a lot of expectations placed on us, and he did a great job helping us navigate those pressures. He talked about the mental side of running and how important it was for our success."

Over the five seasons Steve spent with Mills as a coach, he observed how running programs needed to operate to achieve success. "Working under him has been integral for me as a coach and stepping into a bigger role this year. I wouldn't be where I'm currently at without the coaching experience I had alongside Mills. We will always acknowledge his role in our future successes."

Steve also feels grateful to coach under Arden. "This program means a lot to both of us, and we'll do everything we can to push forward the traditions that Mills created here."

May your Thanksgiving table be full of delicious food and surrounded by your favorite people.

TARPEY FRANZ TEAM
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"There's a quote out there that reads, 'A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life.' That pretty much sums up Coach Mills in how he approaches coaching and how he interacts with his athletes. He was extremely influential in shaping who we are today, and he truly listened to us. We learned so much about perseverance, winning and losing gracefully, confidence and leadership, and being part of a team."

SAL IMPELLITTERI, CLASS OF 1999

*"Being a runner under Mills, I could really tell how invested he was in the sport. I can remember before our conference meet, talking to Mills and **seeing the fiery ambition in his eyes.** I felt grateful because I felt the exact burning ambition to run. I think what made Mills such a great coach is that he loved the sport of running so much. It was really great to share the love of running with him, and I'm so thankful to have been managed under such a legendary coach."*

OLIVER SEDIVY, CLASS OF 2025

*"Senior year track was tough when you weren't going to make state and weren't planning on running in college. I showed up out of shape, promptly got a sinus infection, and ran my worst time in all of high school. I was ready to quit and embrace senioritis. Even though Mills had others on the team to focus on, he didn't quit on me until I had my confidence back. **I've always been thankful that he helped me end high school running on a high note,** instead of just fading away, as I think it played a large part in helping me pivot back to competitive racing in college and keep my love of running the past 20 years."*

HAL BROWN, CLASS OF 2006



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"When I look back on my time in high school and the influential people who made a difference in my life, **Mills stands at the very top of that list.** Cross country and track would not have been the same without Mills as the coach. He taught me so much, not only about running in general, but also about perseverance, strength, overcoming obstacles, teamwork, discipline, planning ahead, visualizing what we want, and of course - remembering to SMILE! I will never forget his unique and contagious laugh, which brightened up our training. I'm so grateful that I was blessed to be one of his runners."

SUSIE LEMONT, CLASS OF 2000



"Anytime I'm asked to discuss a mentor who made an impact on my life, I talk about Mills. I learned so much about persistence, confidence, leadership, and being part of a team from him, and I carry these things with me to this day. I learned how to believe in myself as a distance runner, how to challenge myself, set goals, and stay positive through it all. Now, as a parent and coach, I draw on those lessons. Thank you for all your dedication, support, care, and incredibly generous time during those years. **I am forever indebted.**"

MOIRA LYNCH, CLASS OF 1996

"When someone asks, 'Can you think of a great coach you've had in your life?' I immediately think of Mills. And I know everyone who has ever coached does the same. I'm still in awe of him as I think back on how he wrangled so many of us and helped all of us elevate our running and racing abilities, all while adding in the essential ingredients of humor and friendship. I have tears in my eyes writing this, as it was such a special time and **I want him to know the enormous impact he had on my life.**"

JENNY LEMONT, CLASS OF 2001



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