

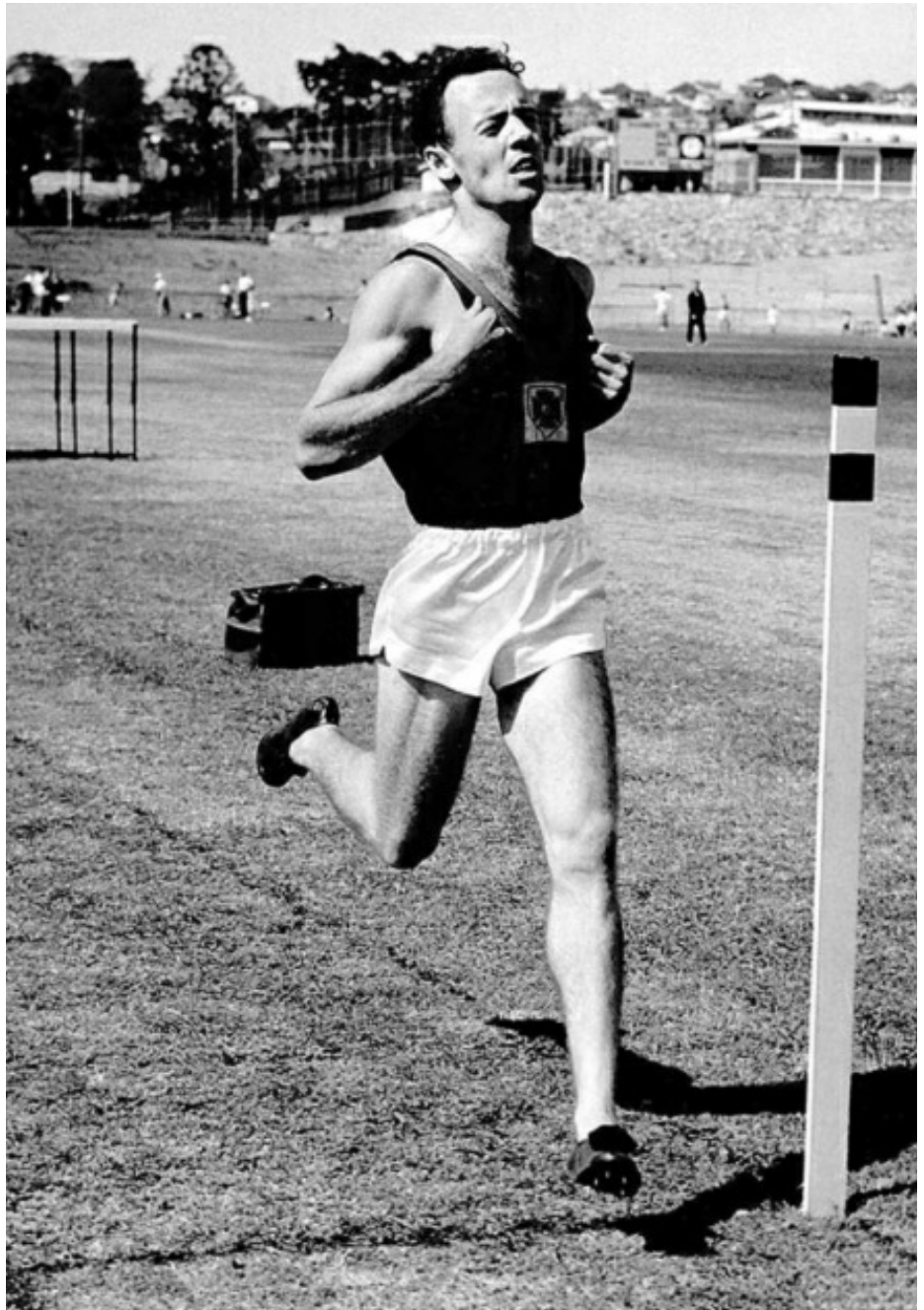
Morland's positive

At an age when most people are saying "I can't do that anymore," Morland Smith just gets on and does it. Whilst most people in their 80s would laugh ruefully if you mentioned them riding a bike, Morland has found an age-appropriate solution and rides to and from Saturday training on his e-trike. This attitude of 'can' typifies his approach to life and explains his sixty-year involvement with athletics.

Born and raised in Queensland, Morland gained his Bachelor and Masters Degrees in Science at the University of Queensland. He forged his career as a geologist, at first in academia and then in professional mineral exploration. Morland married Jan Poggio in 1962 before his studies took them to live in Canada for five years. Whilst in Canada, he gained his PhD at Queen's University Ontario. Two sons were born in Canada and later, a daughter in Kalgoorlie. Kalgoorlie was home while Morland worked on exploration projects and an eventual career highlight, the discovery of a new mineral deposit – Windarra South Nickel deposit near Laverton. Morland's work as a geologist has meant extensive world travel. In addition to Canada and the US, he has seen stints in Indonesia, Argentina, Papua New Guinea, Japan, Georgia, Malaysia and Africa to name a few.

Morland attended Queensland's Warwick State High School, one of the state's oldest educational institutions. He only started running in year 11 and won races over 880 yards and 1 mile. His best performance at that time was winning the Queensland secondary school championships 1-mile event in 4:46.0. In addition to his track successes, he was also accorded the honour of being named WHS athletics champion boy and captain of the school athletics team. He later captained the University of Queensland athletics team. After high school, running mostly took a backseat to Morland's university studies but towards the end of his UQ days, he committed to taking running seriously again.

In 1959-1960 Morland benefitted from a training stint with club-mate and Olympian Dr Tony Blue who was preparing for the Rome Olympics. A run of stellar performances and accolades



Morland Smith wins the mile in 4:11.3 in 1960 at Lang Park Brisbane.



In focus

With Carmel Meyer

followed for Morland and he bested his training mate on numerous occasion. In April 1960 Morland ran his fastest 880yd ever (1:52.8) in a match race between Herb Elliot and Tony Blue. Morland continued to make headlines throughout 1960 and '61. He recorded his best mile

time of 4:10.5 in December 1960, however in an example of the pleasure and pain of running (and life!) Morland's main intention that day had been to celebrate his engagement to Jan by running 4:10.4 and breaking the Queensland 1 mile record.

At this point, Morland had to make a difficult choice between pursuing athletic goals and academic study. When he was awarded a scholarship to Queen's University in Ontario his mind was made up.

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approach to life

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He continued to run in Canada for fitness and in intercollegiate competitions but study came first. In the 1980s Morland joined MAWA, returning to competition if work and injury concerns allowed. In 1980 he ran the City to Surf 12km in 47.08 minutes. In 1981 at the age of 43, he ran his first Perth Marathon in 3hrs 3mins. In 1993 Morland set a masters state record for 1500m. Morland would describe himself as a part-time athlete over these years but in 2006 when he was 69 he again returned to serious training.

Morland's favourite events have traditionally been the 800m and 1500m but he now favours the 1500m and 5000m. In an example of the 'can do' attitude which belies his age, this year he discovered the 2000m steeplechase and this event is now on top of his favourites list!

Although Morland has never had a coach he approaches his running with the same academic rigour evident throughout his life and has been an avid reader of running books by the likes of Franz Stampfl, Sebastian Coe, John Gilmour, Percy Cerutti and others. That same Percy Cerutti (Herb Elliot's coach) may have inadvertently spurred Morland's drive to succeed. When he saw Morland run at university he derisively told him he had a 'terrible style' and would never become a good middle distance runner. Morland says 'I hope I have proved him wrong'. The record books would confirm he has indeed!

Having joined David Carr's training group Morland credits David's training programme for performance improvements. In general, however, Morland says he prefers long slow runs in the winter and faster track work leading up to competition season. He feels he has had 'the usual' in terms of running injuries; his most serious injury occurred off the track – a broken leg resulting from a motorcycle accident in 1997.

Morland competed in the 2018 Oceania championships in Dunedin and came home with five gold medals and one silver. He was particularly pleased to win his first ever steeplechase. His steeple age-graded result was also higher than his other five events. For the 2018 Perth Nationals Morland aimed to win a gold medal in the M80 division. He ended up winning six! At the recent WMA Championships in Malaga he won gold in the 2000m steeplechase.

One of Morland's retirement goals was to write biographies of the families of his four great-grandparents. He has completed three to date and the resulting impressive manuscripts have been published. He is also an accomplished photographer. Morland says this was inevitable as there was always a camera on hand to record life in the Smith household as he grew up. Morland says he was pleasantly surprised with the first image he ever created, using a home made pin-hole camera. The seed was sown and he has amassed an extensive catalogue of works. Ever the academic Morland has created a website which contains an in-depth trove of memorabilia arising from his fascinating life journey. I thoroughly recommend a visit to - morlandsmith.com

Morland's enthusiasm for athletics burns as brightly as ever. He is motivated by his love of running and the health benefits accrued and hopes to continue into his 90s if possible.



Morland Smith competes in the 1500m at the WMA world championships in Malaga.