

TOM LONGBOAT WINS BOSTON MARATHON AND BREAKS RECORD BY FIVE MINUTES

In 1999 *MacLean's* magazine named Tom Longboat the top Canadian sports figure of the 20th century. Born on the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, Ontario on June 4, 1887, Thomas "Tom" Longboat was spotted at a young age for his running abilities. In 1906 Longboat broke the Canadian record by two and a half minutes for a ten-mile race in Toronto. He would end up breaking every Canadian record for distances of a mile or longer. On April 19, 1907, not yet 20, Longboat ran the Boston Marathon. In reporting the race, the *New York Times* referred to "unfavourable conditions" which were in fact rain, sleet and cold winds. For the first five miles Longboat stayed behind the leaders. Then, one by one, he overtook them. He finished with a time of two hours, 24 minutes and 20 seconds, almost five minutes faster than the previous record and more than two and a half minutes ahead of anyone else.

Longboat wasn't able to compete the following year, as he had been deemed professional, but he continued to race, attracting many fans and much media attention. In 1916 Longboat enlisted in the Army and became a messenger in France. He returned home to find that his wife Lauretta had remarried due to an incorrect report she'd received that he was dead. Eventually, he married Martha Sliversmith and they had four children. Longboat worked at various jobs during the Depression, eventually working almost 20 years for the City of Toronto. Longboat died on January 9, 1949. At the 100th anniversary of the Boston Marathon, Longboat's 87-year-old daughter, Phyllis Winnie and other aboriginal Canadians turned up to honour his legacy.

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