



Alumni Spotlight

Kristen Waters '05

March 2018

63 and Counting

Rural Roots

Growing up in York, PA, Dr. Kristin Albright Waters '05 dreamed of becoming a school teacher and attended Millersville University for the acclaimed education programming. "My neighbor, who is now retired from teaching, recommended I look at Millersville," she says. "In the end, I realized that for the value, it was the best institution. Little did I know it was also the best decision I ever made as a young adult." Kristin quickly became involved in on-campus activities, including roles as an orientation leader and student body president. "Serving as student body president gave me the opportunity to learn so much about higher education. As a member or ex-officio to the faculty senate, alumni association, borough council, and council of trustees, I learned the nuances of administration and what moves an institution forward." These experiences served as a catalyst, and in her junior year at MU, Kristin shifted her focus from secondary education to higher-ed.

She completed her Doctorate in Education Leadership from Frostburg State University in 2016 and recently relocated to New York City where she works in admissions at Borough of Manhattan Community College. Kristin remarks, "I learned the skills I use on a daily basis in my job, and I have Millersville to thank for letting me have a seat at the table as a student. It shows how much the student voice is appreciated and respected at MU." Higher-ed isn't her only passion that has its roots at The 'Ville.

A New Passion Evolves

Kristin first learned about marathons during her sophomore year and thought, "It's so amazing that people can actually run that far! That's crazy! At the time running a 5K was a challenge for me. My roommate, Sarah Campana '04, and I would run together and talk about how awesome it would be to run a marathon." In 2005 Kristin moved to Virginia Tech for Graduate School, but her love of hitting the pavement was only beginning to blossom. She texted Sarah, "Let's run the Philly Marathon together. Let's make it happen!" After training for three months, Sarah and Kristin spent Thanksgiving break together in Philadelphia, both finishing their first marathon.



Kristin says after Philly she swore, "Never again!" But in 2010 she ran the Baltimore Marathon Relay. Seeing hundreds of women at the finish line left her awakened and refreshed with a new motivation. Less than a year later, Kristin completed her second race, the Baltimore Marathon, which was soon followed by her first ultra marathon. Kristin says at that point she became "hooked on distance running."

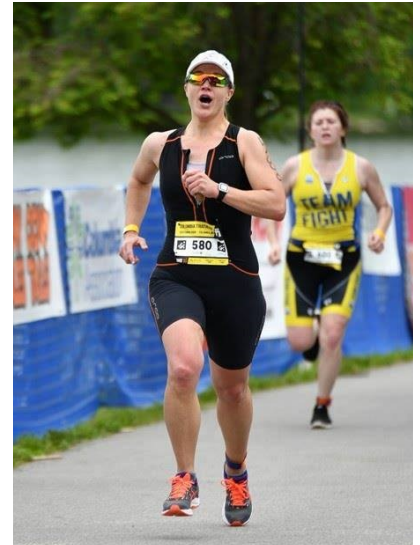
Kristin celebrated her 30th birthday with a self-challenge; she decided to run all of the marathons in Maryland while raising money for [First Descents](#). She successfully completed ten marathons that year and raised more than \$2,000 for the charity. She was running, on average, a marathon per month. Kristin says she "Did the math and realized that if I kept up that pace, I'd be able to qualify for the 100 Marathon Club by my 40th birthday." To date, Kristin has run 63 marathons or ultra marathons and is on track to accomplish her goal. To celebrate her

35th birthday, Kristin completed her first 50-miler, raising more than \$2,500 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. She's also started to dabble in triathlons, completing the Columbia Iron Girl Tri and Olympic Tri with her eyes set on completing an Ironman in 2019.

As she gained experience and confidence, Kristin took on a new role with the sport. She now helps others achieve their running goals as a "pacer." A pacer is an experienced runner who keeps a consistent pace to help other runners finish the race at a desired time. Kristin says, "To date I've paced seven marathons with a goal of pacing two marathons a year. I've come in within 90 seconds of my expected finishing time in each race and have never not met my time. I pace marathons because I love giving back to the running community and supporting other runners in their running goals."

Giving Back

Pacing isn't the only way this Marauder gives back. Kristin also stays connected with her educational roots. "I will always remember Phil Loht ['65] speaking at Millersville's commencement rehearsal. He spoke on behalf of the Alumni Association and shared that the group provides opportunities for current students and alumni alike. I realized I was now a member of the association and had the awesome responsibility of helping future Marauders." Kristin continues, "That really spoke to me. Many people, including alumni, helped me fund my education. How can I not give back? After all, we are all Alums from Day One. A gift of any size or serving on a committee means that I am supporting an environment where other students can experience the same type of growth and development as I did."



Future-casting

Kristin is often asked if she'll continue to run marathons after the 100 mark. She responds, "I'd like to continue to run as long I am able and my body is happy and healthy. I want my 100th to be epic. It will coincide with my 40th birthday, so perhaps I'll compete in Hawaii or Tokyo or Europe! This running journey has revealed that I love to challenge my body physically." Kristin also plans to continue challenging her mind. She says, "MU is the place where I realized I was intelligent, that I could be an administrator and even become a doctor. I was encouraged to aim high and achieve big. It's the institution that transitioned me from student to scholar, from involved student to student leader, and from local girl to world traveler. I now aspire to be a college president like Dr. McNairy and Dr. Anderson. I know I'm living the spirit of Marauder for Life!"

Dr. Waters received the Millersville University Alumni Association's [Young Alumni Achievement Award](#) in 2016.

To learn more about marathon running, Kristin may be contacted at kwaters@bmcc.cuny.edu.

