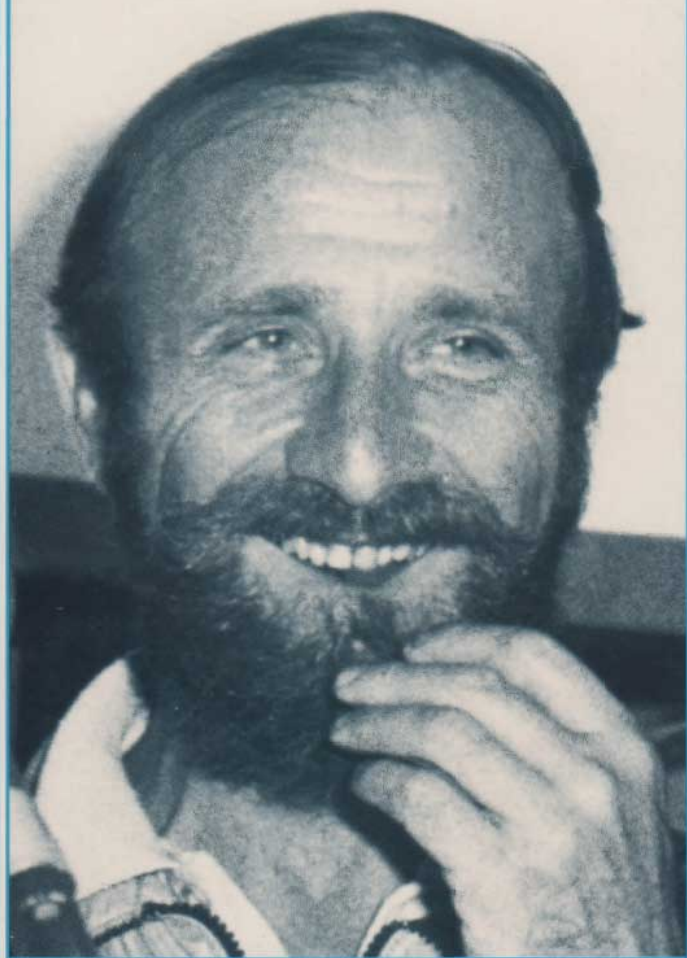


FRED LEBOW

A CELEBRATION OF HIS LIFE



FRED LEBOW

A CELEBRATION OF HIS LIFE

FRED LEBOW

A celebration of his life

Printed by the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team
150-47 87th Ave., Jamaica, NY 11432
6 November 1994

This information is presented as a service and does not necessarily
represent the views of the United Nations or its Agencies.

(ii)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Programme in Honour and Celebration of the Life of Fred Lebow	1
Tributes to Fred Lebow	35
A Special Friendship	75

(iii)

(IV)
Blank

PROGRAMME IN HONOUR
AND CELEBRATION
OF THE LIFE
OF FRED LEBOW

A special programme in honour and celebration of the life of Fred Lebow was held at the United Nations on Tuesday, 18 October 1994, at 1 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium. For over 25 years Fred Lebow was an international figure in the running world who touched millions of sports enthusiasts, not only in New York but around the globe.

The ceremony was attended by Fred's close friends and colleagues, and was co-sponsored by Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations and the United Nations Staff Recreation Council Athletics Club. Following are excerpts from the event.

Blank

(2)



Mr. Adhiratha Keefe, Master of Ceremonies:

Dear friends and colleagues, distinguished guests, we welcome you to an international tribute to Fred Lebow. Many of us first met Fred back in 1977. That was the time when his dynamic vision of the great global marathon was just starting to become a reality.

We feel it is fitting to salute Fred Lebow here at the United Nations, for he did so much to unite all countries of the world with the enthusiasm, joy and excellence of the great marathon here in our host city. Many U.N. staff participate and assist in the New York City Marathon, including members of both the Peace Meditation group and the UNSRC Athletics Club. The ties between the Marathon and the United Nations which Fred encouraged are dynamic and continue to grow.

To begin our programme, Sri Chinmoy will lead us in a few moments of meditation and offer a message in honour of Fred. We then request the singers of the Peace Meditation group to perform two songs composed by Sri Chinmoy in tribute to Fred Lebow.

After leading a moment of silence, Sri Chinmoy offered the following tribute:

My deeply esteemed Brother-Friend Fred Lebow,

Heaven blessed you with a oneness-heart
to be a choice Brother of humanity.
Earth blessed you with an inspiration-life
to be a genuine Friend of humanity.

On earth you were the flower-beauty-thrill
of twenty-six miles.
In Heaven you are now the flower-fragrance-delight
of endless miles.

Many were, many are and many will be founders,
directors and sponsors of marathons throughout the
length and breadth of the world. But the New York
Marathon and Fred Lebow will perpetually shine in
the vanguard of marathon-glories and marathon-
immortals of this earth-planet.



Ms. Tanimia Bossart, leader of the singers:

This first song is dedicated to Fred and the New York Road Runners Club. The song was composed in 1978 by Sri Chinmoy and we sang it at the opening ceremony of the New York City Marathon.

Since 1978 we have sung it several times for Fred, and one of the last times we sang it was in, of all places, Cairo, Egypt. It was one of those wonderful coincidences. In December 1989 Sri Chinmoy and his students were staying at the Sheraton Hotel in Cairo, and Fred also happened to be in Cairo, staying at the same hotel. Fred came to a concert given by Sri Chinmoy, and I will never forget the joy all of us felt when Fred came in the room. There we were, thousands of miles away from New York City, in exotic Cairo, and in walks our friend, Mr. New York City himself. Sri Chinmoy invited Fred to the stage, and we sang this song for him.



PROMISE-COURAGE

I am a member of the New York Road
Runners Club, indeed!
Promise, courage, newness, closeness,
Oneness-perfection I feed.
Quality my progress-choice,
Quantity my success-voice.
Himalayan pride, Atlantic light
With me every day run.
President Lebow, the world's temple-body
Salutes your wisdom-sun.



Fred listens as the singers perform during a concert in Cairo, Egypt, in December 1989.

PROMISE-COURAGE

Words and music by Sri Chinmoy

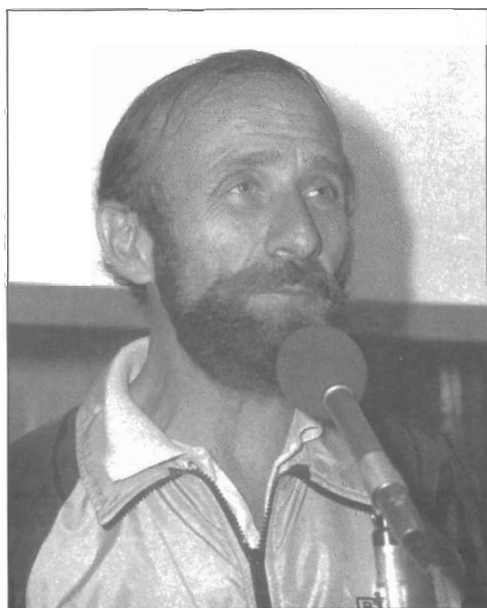
(♩ = 88) Fast

I am a mem - ber of the New York
Road Run - ners Club, in - deed!
Pro - mise, cour - age, new - ness, close - ness,
One - ness - per - fec - tion I feed,
Qua - li - ty my pro - gress - choice,
Quan - ti - ty my suc - cess - voice,
Him - al - 'yan pride, At - lan - tic light
With me ev - 'ry day run.
Pre - si - dent Le - bow, the world's
tem - ple - bo - dy Sa - lutes
your wis - dom - sun.

D.C. al fine
without repeat

Ms. Bossart:

This second song was composed by Sri Chinmoy for the New York Games, which were first held on 29 July 1990. Standing in the centre green of the track, we sang it for Fred at the close of the Games. We haven't sung this song since that day, and when I took it out a few days ago, I was so moved to see the line in the song Sri Chinmoy wrote about Fred. Sri Chinmoy had been aware of the diagnosis of Fred's illness and the fact that originally the doctors had given him about six months to live. But Sri Chinmoy also knew Fred was determined to fight, and he wrote: 'President Fred Lebow, death-challenging voice.' This is exactly what Fred did. He challenged death for an astonishing four more years.



THE NEW YORK GAMES

The New York Games, pinnacle-vision-games.
Champion-smilers' heart-blossom-flames.
President Fred Lebow: death-challenging voice,
Empire State's global oneness-promise-choice.



Fred receives copies of the song at the close of the first New York Games in July 1990.

THE NEW YORK GAMES

Words and music by Sri Chinmoy

The New York Games, fine pin-na-cle - vi-sion -
games. _____

Cham-pi-on swif-ers' heart-blos-soms - flames. _____

Pre-si-dent Fred Le-bow: _____

death -chal-leng-ing voice, _____

Em-pi-re State's glo-bal one-ness - pro-mise -
choice. _____



Mr. Keefe:

Our first speaker today is Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Benon Sevan. He is supposed to be at a different meeting right now, but wanted especially to be at the beginning of the programme for reasons which I believe he will share.



Mr. Benon Sevan, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Conference and Support Services, and United Nations Security Coordinator:

For most of you it probably comes as a surprise that I have known Fred for over 35 years. I met him for the first time in Cleveland, Ohio.

I think Fred picked up his love of running when he and I became roommates, climbing every day 88 steps up and down in a six-flight walk-up apartment on East 53rd Street. I'm very happy that after I moved, Brian Crawford decided to move in and is still going

up and down those steps. We talk about family planning. We used to plan how many times we went downstairs and upstairs. And if we wanted people to come and stay, we made sure they came late, so that they would be so scared of climbing down that they would stay overnight.

I think Fred has touched the hearts of all of us. He had wonderful, unique human qualities. He was a dreamer, and he believed in his dreams. At times I think he was like David Copperfield—he was an illusionist—but he made those illusions come true. He always wanted to do something big in his life. From a little boy who felt sorry that he had stolen a little chick in Romania—which I read in a book that Brian sent to me—he succeeded in joining not only the five boroughs of New York but also the whole world.

He touched the hearts and minds of not only those who run but also those like me who don't run. For a guy who was flat-footed, I think he ran the fastest mile. He put the marathon on the world map itself, not just in New York. He created all sorts of marathons: mini-marathons, ultra-marathons, running up the Empire State Building. Although he didn't organize running down the Empire State Building, I'm sure he would have done that next year.

I don't want to belabour it too much because it's not easy for me to talk about a friend whom I loved so much, but the fact that on such short notice so many of you have come is a real tribute to Fred. He deserves our love, and we should keep him in our memory forever. I thank you.

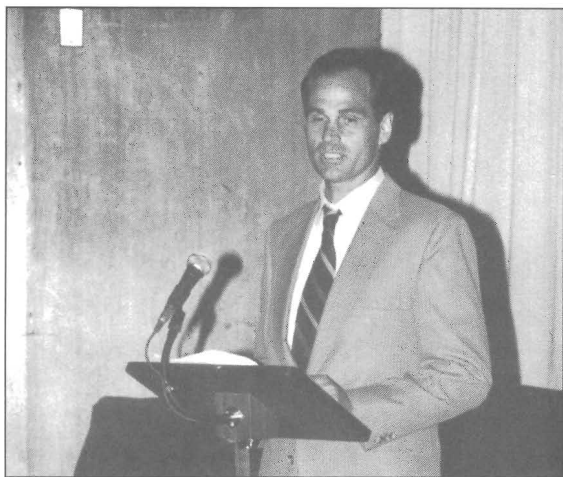
Mr. Keefe:

For Sri Chinmoy and his students, running, especially marathon running, is both a superb form of exercise and a metaphor for the spiritual journey. I would now like to welcome Mr. Rupantar La Russo, Race Director of the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team, who has collaborated closely with the New York Road Runners Club and Fred for a number of years. We have requested Mr. La Russo to kindly introduce our guest speakers today.

Mr. Rupantar La Russo, Race Director, Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team:

Over the past 15 years the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team and the New York Road Runners Club have enjoyed a growing friendship. Our team has been privileged to collaborate with the Road Runners Club in the New York City Marathon and the New York Games, and we always enjoy running in the races of the Road Runners Club, especially the marathon, which is every runner's dream. We greatly value our oneness with the New York Road Runners Club. Fred Lebow offered enormous encouragement to our fledgling team. I know he also offered tremendous inspiration to the Athletics Club here at the U.N. and indeed to runners and running clubs everywhere.

In helping to coordinate today's programme, I've had the opportunity of talking with some of the many people Fred had touched in his own unique way. Many shared with me their favourite "Fred story." I,



too, have a number of “Fred stories.” And all of them recall fond memories.

Sri Chinmoy and Fred had great affection and respect for each other, and I was happy to be in a position to share in this special relationship.

In reading the tributes sent in for the programme, I noticed a common thread. Everyone saw Fred as a man of the heart and a man of oneness.

At the commemorative programme held in Central Park this past Wednesday, Rabbi Stauber, a lifetime friend of Fred’s, who is here with us today, remarked while looking out at the 4,000 faces before him that it was like a U.N. assembly. So, it is only fitting that Fred be honoured here at the U.N., and we are grateful to have this opportunity to greet some of his many friends and admirers from all over the world who were touched and energised by his generous spirit. Now I would like to ask Rabbi Stauber to say a few words.



Rabbi Stauber:

We are commanded to pay tribute to the host, the United Nations, and I would like to thank Mr. Benon Sevan, the Assistant Secretary-General, for his kind words, for his love, for his friendship to Fred. I would also like to pay special tribute to the President of the New York Road Runners Club, Allan Steinfeld, who is here with us today.

Fred Lebow was never an individual. He represented humanity; that's why we're here today. The Marathon is a mini-United Nations in itself. It has grown, as we all know, to bring together 30,000 individuals from all over the world, and that's not an individual; that is the world.

I think, Michael, your father and mother, together with Fred, are here with us today. The Zohar, which is the essence of the Talmud, tells us that the soul in Heaven is given the freedom to rejoin those of us living on earth on special happy occasions. This is one of those happy occasions.

I will never forget when I met Fred's parents. They rented an apartment on Union Street in 1958. They

came especially from Israel trying to get Fred, for Heaven's sake, to get married. His mother said to me, "I don't know what's wrong with Fred; he never stops running."

I said, "What's wrong with that?"

She answered, "Don't you see? His legs have gone into his head!"

The Lebowitz home was a loving home. It was an open house for everyone. Fred grew up in a house that embodied kindness and charity. It was the epitome of those things that we read about in the Bible.

Fred Lebow was not strictly religious in terms of practice, although when he stopped running—he was unfortunately bed-ridden for days and months at times—he had time to think. But Fred was the embodiment of that which touches so many lives.

I think the beauty of running and the Road Runners Club and the Marathon is that everyone can do it. Everyone who has legs can run, and even some who are handicapped have joined. It's the beauty of humanity, touching each other, figuratively and literally—the closeness, the oneness, as has been expressed in the beautiful verses that have been sung here today.

We're very proud as New Yorkers of having the United Nations here. I'm sure Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations would have been extremely proud that the United Nations can indeed honour the memory of a refugee, of a person like Fred Lebow, who, without much formal schooling or higher education, tried to make a difference.

I'd like to conclude by quoting a passage in Joel,

Chapter 2, that I think is relevant: "When the day will come, they run like mighty men. They climb the wall like men of war, and they march everyone in his place, and they do not break their ranks. Nor does one thrust or push another. They walk everyone in his path, and they burst through and beyond the weapons. They are not wounded." That is the legacy of the New York Road Runners Club and of Fred Lebow. I hope that this legacy will live on. We should all dedicate ourselves to this promise—that all of humanity shall run and not be wounded.



Mrs. Sarah Katz, Fred Lebow's sister:

Thank you so much for loving my brother so much, as we do. Thank you very much. *(Mrs. Katz offered this same message in several different languages.)*

Mr. Michael Lebow, Fred Lebow's brother:

I am completely overwhelmed. I just agree with what my sister said. Thank you all.

Mr. Allan Steinfeld, President, New York Road Runners Club:

I can promise you that Fred's legacy will live on, and the proof of that is in the audience here—people who have taken time out of their day to honour him. Our staff, who are busy working on the event that Fred loved, the New York City Marathon, welcomed the opportunity to come here to pay respects to Fred and to be together.

Fred was a great PR man, and he timed his death perfectly. What better promotion for the New York City Marathon than what occurred? But more importantly, Fred knew that we would grieve; he knew that we loved him. When you are grieving, the best thing to do is to stay busy, and believe me, we are busy!

I appreciate the opportunity that Sri Chinmoy and his organisation have given us, and the singers that sang have such beautiful voices. I don't have a good voice, nor will I try to sing, but I am reminded of one of my favourite songs which personifies Fred. Tom Paxton wrote a song in the mid-sixties called "Rambling Boy," and the first two lines are: "He was a man/and a friend always." That's what Fred was to me, and what he was to all the people here and people around the world.

I'm pleased that the picture that is up here is the way we all remember Fred: eyes gleaming, smiling and healthy. It's a rather old picture, and you all know what the clue is: it doesn't say, "Chemical Bank"; it says, "Manufacturers Hanover."

The U.N. was a special place to Fred. In 1984 we hosted the World Cross Country Championships at



the Meadowlands. We had a dinner here at the U.N., because it was an international event. As you all know, the International Breakfast Run happens here the Saturday before each Marathon. So it's a special place to us, and I think it's only fitting that we are here today to pay tribute to Fred. Fred was a man of the world, a man of peace. That is what the U.N. is about: bringing people together. He will never be forgotten. Thank you.

Mr. Ted Corbitt, the first President of the NYRRC:

Fred Lebow was honoured several times by the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team over the past years. I was at the original rendition of Sri Chinmoy's song for Fred Lebow.

The New York Road Runners Club experienced some incredibly good luck, beginning with the arrival of Fred Lebow. I would like to mention several people and events which helped to create the Fred Lebow that the public knows and respects.

Fred Lebow proposed starting a new marathon to be held in Central Park in 1970. The then NYRRC President, Vincent Chiappetta, got a reluctant Parks Department to allow use of Central Park for the marathon race. This turned out to be a major move. Vincent Chiappetta was initially co-director of the New York City Marathon. The novice runner Lebow had no experience putting on a race at that time.

George Spitz, a local runner and politician, wanted to stage a special race in 1976 to celebrate the Bicentennial. He, Lebow and the NYRRC made this the New York City Marathon race for 1976, and thereafter. Without Spitz, there would be no five-borough marathon race today.

Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton, a friend of George Spitz, got permission for the race to cross the city bridges. That was a must.

There was also Allan Steinfeld, who solved some serious growth problems as the running boom exploded.

The Road Runners Club was also blessed with enough volunteers to make the running programme a success. Among others who made a difference are



Joseph Kleinerman, Brian Crawford, Dick Traum and the NYRRC Board of Directors. The previously-mentioned people appeared when needed. We can expect the same for the future.

We don't have to re-invent Fred Lebow, for he left a well-functioning organization, the New York Road Runners Club, which will continue his work. Fred Lebow's leadership made a difference in the lives of people in New York City, and it was nice to hear the Mayor say this publicly last week. Fred Lebow had influence in the United States and around the globe. In that sense, this is a proper setting in which to remember him.

Mr. Peter Roth, Treasurer, NYRRC:

A lot of words have been spoken about what Fred has done for running and the world. Those of us here who knew Fred personally have had an opportunity to think about what Fred has meant to us and how Fred has helped us grow. I always wanted to watch Fred and learn from him. When I saw him put together the 1976 Marathon, I knew that it would take a miracle to create that. I also knew that I was watching a miracle-maker at work. It was an enlightening experience for me.

After that Fred asked me to become the Treasurer of the Road Runners Club. He said, "I want you to give me a tough time. You can only take on this role if you're willing to be strong and fight with me about different issues." I don't think he knew what he was getting into. We did have tremendous, tremendous battles, but when the dust settled, we would sit with each other and know that we were riding together.

I always saw Fred as somebody who knew what he was doing and had complete control. He had great personal power. Even when he was angry, I could see him saying to himself, "I should act angry now."

I've been thinking about how Fred could make so much happen. What was it about him that could get people to act, to change their minds? He would go to meetings with all kinds of officials all over the city, the country, the world, and get them to do things that they wouldn't ordinarily do. How could he do that? My feeling is that it was because Fred appeared so different. He would never dress like everyone else. He always dressed the way he wanted to dress, and it was



different. He acted differently, and he controlled his emotions differently. He upset the way we see things so that we couldn't read him, we couldn't understand him the way we understand most people. So there was nothing to bank our decisions on. We couldn't put him into any of our typical categories. All that was left was to read his heart. I think that's what he's left for all of us—to know his heart, and in turn to know our own, and to continue to bring that heart to the world. Thank you.



Ms. Raleigh Mayer, Director of Public Relations and Media, NYRRC:

Fred has had such a warm, personal family and many friends along the way—an international family. It's so fitting to be here at the U.N. Fred not only set an example and was quite an influence worldwide. He was also a shameless borrower. As he would put it, he stole great ideas right and left. He saw roses being handed out at the Berlin Marathon; he brought roses to be handed out to the women in the New York City Marathon. He saw airplanes flying at Normandy trailing coloured smoke, and he came back and said to President Allan Steinfeld, "Get me those airplanes; we're having coloured smoke!" It's a great credit to Fred that he was not shy about recognizing a good idea as well as conceiving his own.

I'd like to tell you that individuals from 99 countries are entered in this year's New York City Marathon. If Fred were editing as I talk, he would say, "No, no, say, 'Over 99'!"

Then I would say, "But Fred, there aren't 100 yet."

And he would say, "You don't know that; some of these people may not know where they come from!"

Fred always saw bigger, better, farther, wider, and he was understood internationally as well.

We heard Sarah speak beautifully in several languages, all of which I'm sure Fred was fluent in. Fred also was probably the originator of the international sign language. Putting his hands up meant, "Stand back; you're not giving the runners enough space!" Circling with one hand meant, "Hurry, you're on your way to a world record!" Thumbs up meant, "You're doing great, keep it up, congratulations!"

When Fred was ill, there were times when it was difficult for him to speak and be heard. During one press event that I was presiding over, he was sitting in the back of the room. I knew he was tired and having a bad day, so I thought he had chosen not to be introduced. Finally I got this nudge, and I turned to see Fred whispering, "Aren't you going to introduce me? Aren't you going to let me speak? I'm the Race Director."

I said, "Of course, Fred, absolutely," and put him on the microphone. Then I thought, "Oh dear, no one is going to understand him. They're going to ask me to explain what he said, and I can't understand him." When he got up to the microphone, his voice was almost inaudible. I could not make heads or tails of what he said. As soon as he finished speaking, the room burst into wild applause, there was violent cheering, and the photographers were flashing like crazy. I thought, "Of course, Fred is always understood; he speaks a true international language—passion, commitment, devotion, enthusiasm and love."

He will be heard forever more. Thank you.

Mr. Stu Mittleman, former 1,000-mile world record holder and one of the top ultra-runners of the New York area:

Two things I think about immediately when I think of Fred. The first one is that he's one of the few people that I would pass every day in Central Park. Now sometimes I close my eyes and I see him up ahead at the next turn as I'm making my rounds each day. The second thing I think about is that he is one of the only people I know that dressed better than I did.

If he leaves a legacy to me, it is to be yourself, to do the things and follow the things that you feel passionate about. For so many years Fred was a supporter of the ultra-marathon community. At every major moment in my life, Fred was always there supporting me and my family.

I remember Fred being there on the last day of the 1,000-mile race that Sri Chinmoy and the Marathon Team put on. It was quite obvious that I would be setting a world record. My mom told me later that in the middle of the night Fred said to her, "Well, Mom, you finally have a world champion." Then, in nearly the same breath, he turned to my handler and said, "Make sure he gets off the track now so he finishes when the TV crews are here in the morning!"

Another image of Fred that will be with me forever is metaphorical for all the things that he was trying to help us with as runners. He had the idea, I think, back in 1982 of bringing forward the ultra-marathon in the same way that he had made the marathon such a popular event. He moved the 100-mile race into Shea Stadium and arranged for national TV to cover the

finish. With that, ultra-marathoners from all over the country came out of the woodwork.

Fred orchestrated this event, which was going to be held on a Friday night. On Wednesday it began to rain. It rained all day Wednesday, all day Thursday and all day Friday. I remember hearing on the way to the race that a disaster area was declared in Connecticut. The cones that were being set up to mark the course in and around the stadium were floating away.

With 60 runners running 100 miles, the track that had been rained on for three days became six to eight inches of mud. But in the middle of the night, there was Fred, rake in hand, making sure that the path was good enough for the runners to step on.

I'll miss you, Fred. God bless you. But you'll be with us always. Thank you.





Above: Fred hands out the prizes at the first Sri Chinmoy 1000-Mile Race, held in Flushing Meadow Park in May 1985.

Below: After the awards ceremony, Sri Chinmoy offers Fred a Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team track suit, making him an honorary member of the Team.



Mr. Keefe:

We began our programme earlier with a personal statement from one Assistant Secretary-General, and we would like to close with a message from another.

*Message from Mr. Samir Sanbar,
United Nations Assistant Secretary-General
for Public Information*

Perhaps the greatest measure of a life is the extent to which a person was able to inspire others to do something constructive. Such being the case, it must be said that Fred Lebow's life was an unprecedented success, for he was a source of inspiration to literally millions of runners around the world.

Over the years, hundreds of United Nations staff members of all levels of seniority have participated in New York Road Runners Club races and clinics, including the New York City Marathon. In fact; the Marathon generates such a spirit of goodwill that even non-runners, including many United Nations staff members, have been inspired each year to volunteer their time and lend their talents: as language interpreters for thousands of non-English-speaking participants or by helping with the mind-boggling logistical aspects of managing tens of thousands of people from start to finish.

For the past 16 years, runners from up to 74 countries have started the pre-Marathon three-mile Breakfast Run on the North Lawn of the United Nations. And it is most fitting that the New York

Road Runners Club has decided to dedicate next year's Marathon to the United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary.

Fred Lebow will be missed, but the legacy of his inspiration will flourish. While offering condolences to his family and colleagues, I would also wish President Allan Steinfeld, and the staff and members of the New York Road Runners Club, every success in your efforts to continue that legacy.

Mr. Keefe:

On behalf of the organisers and the many groups and individuals throughout the house that made this happen, I'd like to thank all of you for making space in your lives to join us today. I'd like especially to thank Fred for bringing us all together.

All participants and members of the audience receive mementos of the programme from Sri Chinmoy, including special cookies as well as T-shirts with Fred's picture on them.



Allan Steinfeld receives one of the T-shirts which the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team offered to all of the Road Runners Club staff. Under the picture of Fred is written, "Fred Lebow, the running world salutes you." More than 300 members of the Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team will wear this shirt to honour Fred during the NYC Marathon on 6 November 1994.