

Barbara Luciano is 60 and she's still a master

By Fiona Green



Masters winner Barbara Luciano is at left. She was second overall female finisher behind Emily Koenig, an 18-year-old UTA runner. Photo by Movin' Pictures.

It is unusual that the second place female runner in a local 10K is a grandmother. It is also unusual that Masters winners are 60 years old, but that's only because 60-year-old Barbara Luciano doesn't race much. Placing second overall in the Don Zetnick Arlington Winter Run 10K on Dec. 4 with a time of 43:38, the petite, unassuming, art teacher from Arlington finished behind 18-year-old Emily Koenig, a student at UT-Arlington who blazed through the course in 37:49.

Luciano who has lived in the Metroplex since 2001, hails from Oklahoma where she and her husband, Norman, were fierce Masters

competitors. The two train together, running daily 6-8-mile runs with a long run on the weekend and sometimes throwing in a few extra 3 or 4 milers for fun. As well as natural talent, other factors that make her a successful runner are consistency, dedication and a true love of the sport.

While some runners might consider packing away their running shoes when they leave their 50s, Luciano is embracing her latest milestone and has taken on a new challenge -- to beat the existing Oklahoma State records for her age group. In October, she gained her first success in the 5K. No stranger to the Hall of Fame, she already achieved age-group State records at the age of 50, 51 and 55. She also holds a record for the 10K after running a solid 38:54 at the age of 48, and for the marathon by running a 3:08 at age 47.

She and Norman greatly enjoy the Oklahoma racing scene, explaining that most race courses in the Oklahoma City and Tulsa area are certified, which means that should they run a fast enough qualifying time, it would automatically be counted as a state record. Norman incidentally holds an age group record in the half marathon after running a 1:19:32 at age 49. Earlier this year Barbara enjoyed a trip to Vesano, Italy, her father's birthplace. She ran a 10K while she was there and finished in first place, to the delight of her family! Unfortunately, she was unable to wait for the awards ceremony and was disappointed to learn that she had missed out on receiving a beautiful necklace donated by a local jeweler. However, the thrill of beating all the youngsters was perhaps satisfying enough.

For any Masters runners who are starting to slow down a little, Barbara is a huge inspiration. Don't hang up your running shoes yet. Setting new, realistic challenges (not necessarily state records) might be all the motivation needed to keep on racing.