



John “Bear” Aiken ‘67 left his mark in the track and field record books; although, until his junior year, GHS did not even have a track! Aiken was a three-time letterman, winning the 1967 PIAA Class B Championship in the half-mile run and anchoring the 880 yard-relay team that qualified for the state meet as well. John held the 880-yard school record at GHS for over 15 years. Teammate and fellow GHS Athletic Hall of Fame member, Dennis Fell, describes Aiken as a “workhorse” setting the GHS standard for the sprint events in the 220, 440, 880 yard runs and in the relays.

John was active off the track as well winning the Bausch & Lomb Award as top science student and acting as band president. As the year book Sports Editor, track and field coverage was never better.

Following graduation, Aiken enrolled in the School of Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh where he ran track for four years, lettering three times. His junior year, John placed 3rd at the IC5A Indoor Championships in the 1000-yard run. As a senior, he was a member of the mile and 2-mile relay teams that set Panther Varsity records.

Aiken graduated from Pitt Magna Cum Laude in 1971 with a BS degree in Chemical Engineering. He earned his MS degree in Chemical Engineering in 1973 launching a 33-year career in chemical process research and development with US Steel Research and other spin-off companies. Following retirement, John worked in patent services, ultimately founding and leading the Pittsburgh Inventors Club. He is the inventor or co-inventor on over 12 U.S. patents.

At age 45, Aiken returned to the track competing at the Keystone State games in the 200m and 400m races. In his early 50’s, he joined a Pittsburgh-area relay team that won three gold medals at the Penn Relays. This success, coupled with a desire to maintain his fitness, led John to compete in state and national meets for the Senior Games and USATF Masters.

In 2007, John won the 400m silver medal in the 55-59 age group of the National Senior Games. At the 2015 Senior Games in Minneapolis, he took the bronze medal in the 100m, silver in the 200m and gold in the 400m race for the 65-69 age bracket. At the 2023 Senior Games in Pittsburgh, he was the oldest in his age group to qualify for the finals in the 200m and 400m races, finishing 6th in the 400m race. He continues to train for track competition in the 75-79 age bracket.

John lives in Monroeville, PA with his wife, Jane of 50+ years. They have three children and one grandchild. He’s been an active member of the Monroeville Lions Club for over 25 years holding a number of titles including Race Director of the Run-for-Sight fundraiser.