

RUN HARD RUN FAST RUN TOGETHER

Runners from all over the nation come together on March 4, 2017 to participate in the annual Run Hard Columbia Marathon



READY, SET, GO. Runners competing in the race hit the street after hearing the crowd of honking cars signifying the start of the race. Runners had stretched and socialized before the race kicked off at 7:30 that morning. *Photo by Alex Myers.*



LACING UP. Marcus Rawford tightens his shoelaces minutes before the race commences. Rawford traveled from Athens, Georgia in order to race in his 12th marathon. "Running gives me a sense of freedom and is a good stress reliever for me," Rawford said. *Photo by Madison Harding.*

ICE COLD. Four marathoners take cover under an entrance to harbor from the bitter winds and the numbing temperatures. Others were seen utilizing unique ways to keep warm like wrapping themselves up in a thermal blankets or running in place. "The wind is brutal this morning," runner Jason Nole said. "Runners should do everything to keep their muscles warm before a big race like this." *Photo by Alex Myers.*

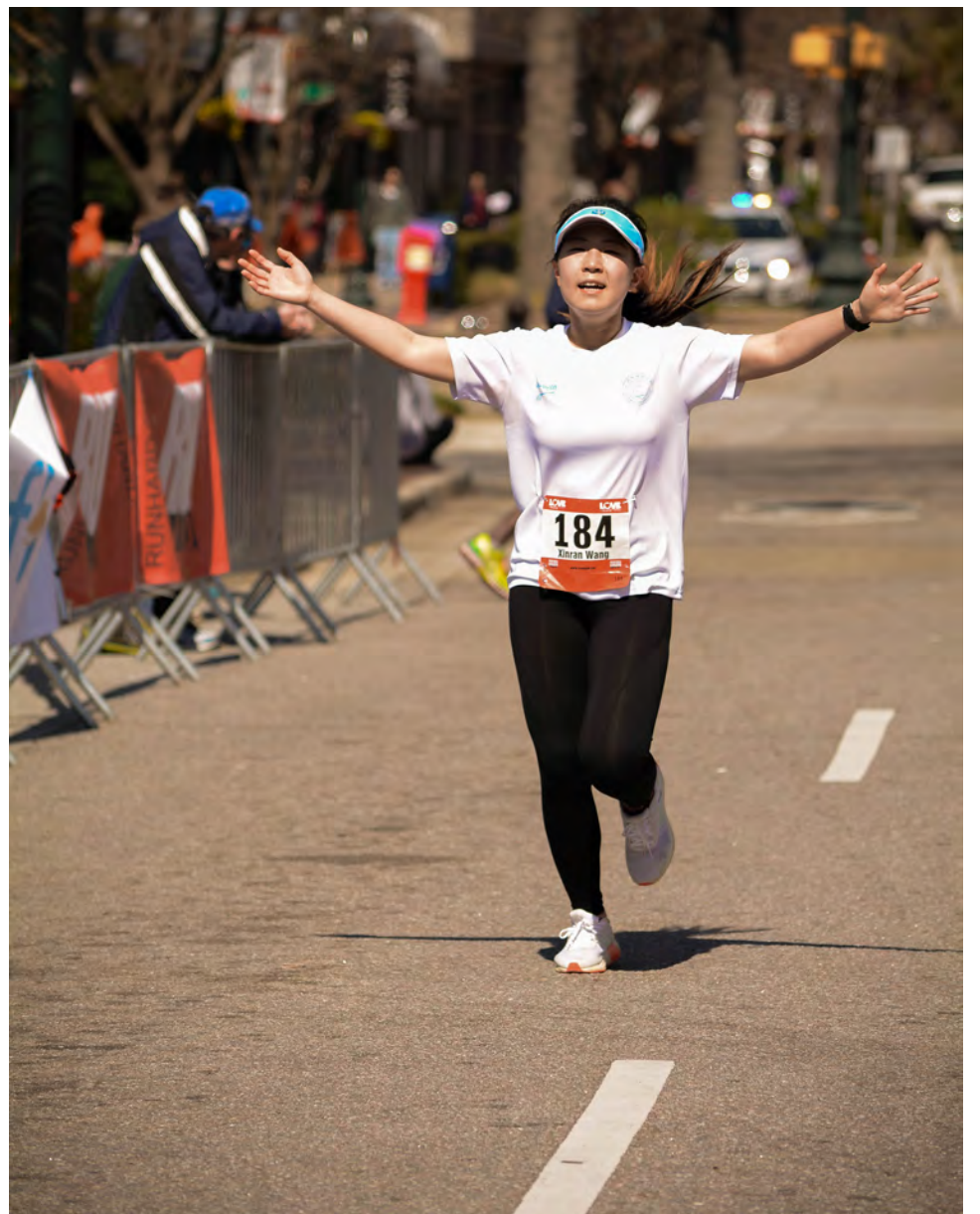


HOME OF THE BRAVE. Veteran, Lt. Gen. Micheal Gray, salutes the flag during the playing of the National Anthem. Gray started running after retiring from the Army in 2014. "Running keeps me in shape now that I do not the Army to do it for me," Gray said. *Photo by Madison Harding.*



MAN'S BEST FRIEND. Chris Vokaty arrives at the race site with first time marathoner and companion, Oscar. Oscar played a significant role in Vokaty putting his running shoes on again after suffering from both a mental and physical breakdown in 2012. *Photo by Madison Harding.*

EYES ON THE PRIZE. Shawanna Wilson stands at the starting line focusing her mind on the race ahead of her. Moments before the race begins, she prays for a fast time and safe race. Wilson has competed in marathons and triathlons around the nation. This is her 77th race in only 6 years. "I enjoy running because of the adrenaline rush it gives me, Wilson said. "When I cross the finish line, I feel like no one can touch me. I just feel invincible." *Photo by Madison Harding.*



FINISHING STRONG. Xinran Wang throws her arms out in celebration after competing in her first marathon. Wang said she became motivated to run after her dad was diagnosed with cancer and was unable to run anymore. "My dad had a special place in the running community and after he was diagnosed, I decided to pick running up as a hobby to keep him involved in racing even if he is not the one running," Wang said. *Photo by Alex Myers.*



ON DUTY. Columbia paramedic, George Hanson, waits readily for the race to begin. Hanson's wife, an avid racer, runs in marathons frequently. "Having someone so close to you who runs makes me feel like part of the family," Hanson said. "That is the main reason I volunteer to work the races." *Photo by Alex Myers.*