

Basha High School Cross Country Team
proudly presents motivational speaker:



Billy Mills Olympic Gold Medalist

September 11, 2009
6:00 pm

Basha High School
"D" Building/Auditorium
5990 S. Val Vista Dr.
Chandler, AZ 85249
Parking by the tennis courts.

Billy Mills won the Gold Medal at what many have called the most incredible race ever run in Olympic history. As a relatively unknown runner, he came from behind to beat world champion runners in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, 10,000 meter event.



For questions or additional information, contact: pschwei54@aol.com



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Mills was born on June 30, 1938 on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. During his youth, he ran over the prairies and hills near his Lakota Sioux Reservation home. His mother, who was one quarter Sioux, died when Mills was seven year old. His father, who was three quarters Sioux, died five years later. Native Americans considered him to be of mixed blood. The white world called him a Native American.

After breaking many high school track records on the reservation, Mills received a scholarship to attend Kansas University. He then became an officer in United States Marine Corps.

As a young Marine lieutenant, Mills had been allowed to train for the 1964 Olympics, held in Tokyo, Japan. He qualified for the team in both the 10,000-meter race and the marathon, but was not expected to win either race. No American had ever won the 10,000-meter race in the Olympics. But Mills had always lived according to the teachings of his father, who had challenged him to live his life as a warrior and assume responsibility for himself.

Australia's Ron Clarke was world famous as a runner in the 10,000-meter event and was the odds-on favorite to win a gold medal. Mohamed Gammoudi, a Tunisian runner, was expected to finish in second place for the silver medal. Any of the other runners were capable of taking a third place bronze medal, according to the experts. It was thought that none of the other runners could win.

Mills, a believer in visualization or "imagery," did not permit a negative thought to enter his head as he worked toward the biggest race of his life. He had for some time before been visualizing a young Native American boy winning the 10,000-meter event at the 1964 Olympics. He created that picture in his mind over and over again. If a thought about not winning came into his mind, he would spend hours erasing the negativity. There could be only one result!

The race finished with Billy Mills, the unknown runner, winning at the tape. He had completed the race in a new Olympic record time of 28:24.4, a full 46 seconds better than his best previous time. The crowd had witnessed one of the greatest upsets in Olympic history. To date, no other American has won a gold medal in the 10,000 meters.

After his great running victory at Tokyo, Mills was honored with the warrior name of 'Makata Taka Hela' by the Lakota Nation. It means "love your country" and "respects the earth." His life story was made into the film, Running Brave, starring Robby Benson and produced by Englander Productions in 1983.

Mills, who was elected to the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame in 1984, moved with his wife, Pat, and their three daughters, Christy, Lisa, and Billie JoAnne, to Fair Oaks, a Sacramento, California, suburb. He devotes his time to speaking to Native American youths and raising money for charities, such as Christian Relief Services.