

SPOTLIGHT

Jon Rauser

President and Owner - The Rauser Agency, Inc.

(Member since 1973)



Jon Rauser's roots in the Rotary Club of Milwaukee are deep.

His grandfather served on the RCM BOD in 1935 and his father was also a member. Jon joined in 1973 (he says he was just 9 years old, but we'll leave fellow Rotarians to judge the veracity of that statement). Jon's involvement in RCM extends even to this writer, as he introduced me as the 13th woman to join RCM in late 80s and after a hiatus re-introduced me in 2006.

Some years ago, Jon was an avid marathon runner and participated in dozens of these long-distance endurance tests.

The highlight of his running career was his participation in the Moscow Marathon. Long-time Milwaukee Athletic Club (MAC) employee Igor Skylar was a coach of the Russian Speed Skating team. Igor ached to visit his homeland and convinced the Russian Sports Federation to allow him to bring six marathon runners to Moscow to compete in the 1992 event. Jon Rauser, a long time MAC member and an accomplished runner, was one of the six.

The following year, the group invited Russian runners to participate in Al's Run, with one of the Russian invitees winning the event! While the Moscow event was certainly the highlight, Jon's running career included participation in the famous Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, MN. He also ran the Milwaukee Marathon and had the crowning achievement of breaking the three-hour mark. (Marathoners will understand that hallmark).

In addition to running, Jon is also a very fine golfer. He and his wife, Sandy (a very good golfer and tennis player), often play together at their retreat in Scottsdale, AZ. Together the couple spends about six weeks each year in Scottsdale, with Sandy staying longer during the winter, while Jon returns to Milwaukee to continue to operate The Rauser Agency.

Jon didn't start his career intent on operating a successful insurance brokerage firm specializing in employee health care benefit options, the family business was Shorewood Mills, a maker of undergarments. Sadly, Jon's father passed away at just 49 years old. Jon had attended UW Madison, but upon his father's passing he took the reins of the business. When it became

apparent the time had come for Shorewood Mills to close, Jon re-examined his future. Armed with a degree in history, (Rotarian David Buck was one of his professors when Jon finished up at UWM), Jon liked the idea of being his own boss and being self-employed was a good fit.

With help from former Rotarian Bob Wagner, Jon started selling life insurance, but back in 1980s employers were talking about skyrocketing health insurance costs (sound familiar?). Jon determined he could carve a niche finding solutions for beleaguered small business owners. Currently the firm helps about 150 businesses manage their employee health care solutions. The bread and butter accounts for The Rauser Agency are those with about 30 to 40 employees; fully 90% of Wisconsin's businesses have fewer than 50 employees.

Jon and Sandy Rauser recently celebrated their 24th wedding anniversary. Those of us who have known Jon a long time will remember his famous handlebar moustache (ala Rollie Fingers), however, Sandy was not a fan and off came the bars.

In addition to playing golf together, Jon and Sandy love gardening at their Grafton home. They have a beautiful yard, but Jon also really enjoys his work. He views running The Rauser Agency as much fun as having another hobby.

Jon has seen many changes to Rotary and approves of them all. He remembers when the first woman joined causing one member to resign because of gender-bias. Jon knew the club when it wasn't as diverse and lively as it is now and he's all for it. Because his office is in Mequon, he sometimes misses Rotary meetings for weeks in a row, however, every time he resurfaces he's greeted warmly. Rotary has been a part of his life for 45 years, he hopes to continue his membership for many years to come!

Editor's Note:



This year we will feature the popular Spotlight series bi-weekly. The week of February 1 will profile James "Jamie" Reeve, III, Senior Vice President, Wealth Strategies, Northern Trust Company. Rotary Spotlight is written by RCM Board Member (and its Sergeant at Arms) Barbara Velez