



Zuma's
Paw Prints

Norman Vaughan 1905-2005

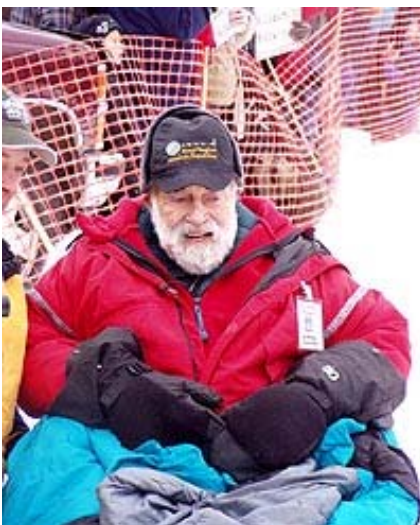
Hi Boys and Girls,

I want to tell you about a very special human named Colonel Norman Vaughan. He has been an inspiration to humans and sled dogs for almost 100 years. He has departed earth to handle dogs on the heavenly teams, but his adventurous spirit lives on in the lives that were touched by him.

Colonel Norman Vaughan was born on December 19, 1905, in Salem, Massachusetts. He died on December 23, 2005 in Anchorage, Alaska shortly after celebrating his 100th birthday. What he did with his life in the years between was worthy of the two books he wrote about his adventures and there was plenty left over to write a couple more books.

Norman Vaughan graduated from Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts and then attended Harvard. He left Harvard University to join Admiral Richard E. Byrd on his expedition to the Antarctic from 1928 to 1930. He was the head dog musher for the expedition and later went on to participate in the 1932 Winter Olympics as a dog musher.

When World War II broke out, Vaughan was right in the thick of things as a First Lieutenant. He trained soldiers and sled dogs for search and rescue missions. He once told Lois and me a story about how the sled dogs and their handlers went to the front lines at the Battle of the Bulge to retrieve the wounded soldiers and take them to ambulances waiting on the plowed roads. The Battle of the Bulge was the worst battle of the war in terms of casualties (wounded, missing or killed in action.) Many more would have died of their wounds if it had not been for the brave men and dogs that brought them from the front lines to medical care.



After the war, then Colonel Vaughan worked as a civilian employee of the military until he was 50 years old. He moved to Anchorage in 1973 and went to work at the University of Alaska Anchorage. In 1975, at the age of 70, he ran the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race for the first time. He went on to enter 13 Iditarods and completed the race six times. He last finished the race in 1990 at the age of 84.

Colonel Vaughan is remembered for his winning smile and his great stories. In 1981, Pope John Paul visited Anchorage. Norman invited the Pope to drive his dog sled, Vaughan went along as a passenger (just in case the Pope needed any help). Norman was the first person to snowmachine from Anchorage, Alaska to Boston, Massachusetts. In December 1994, Vaughan and his wife, Carolyn Muegge-Vaughan, along with Alaskan mountain guide, Vern Tejas, returned to Antarctica to climb Mt. Vaughan (10,350 feet), the mountain Admiral Byrd had named in Norman's honor so many years before.

Photo by June Price - 2005 Restart

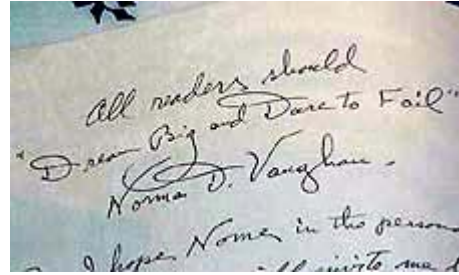
At the age of 99 he still attended the Iditarod Start and Restart. At the restart, he stated that he would be back on the Iditarod Trail next year.



Photos by Lois Harter – 2004 Iditarod Book Fair

Norman lived life to the fullest and showed others that life didn't stop at 60 or 70, or even 80 or 90. He dreamed the impossible and lived his dreams. If he failed at something, he just picked himself up and made better preparations for the next time he tried to live that dream.

The Colonel is still an inspiration to all and will be sorely missed. He was the oldest person to run the Iditarod Race, but the youngest at heart.



Norman's personal motto was, "Dream Big and Dare to Fail", a motto that took him all over the world and made him a hero to young and old and the in between.

Until next time,



Lots of Tail Wags,
Zuma