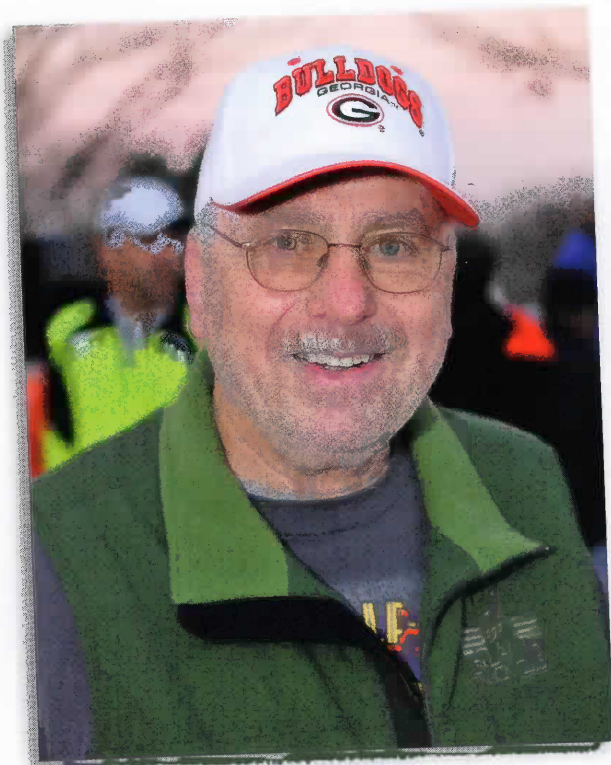


# volunteer profile

B Y B R A N T L E Y S H E R R E R

## Volunteer Hall of Famer Frank Woodall

**A** cold, dark, February Saturday morning dawns over the Georgia Perimeter College parking lot. At 5:30 the ATC staff and volunteers will begin getting ready for the Hearts and Soles 5K, but, as usual, one volunteer has beaten everyone there in his zeal to



be on time: Frank Woodall's maroon Dodge pickup truck sits alone in the parking lot as he waits patiently for the staff to arrive. It would not be a proper ATC race if Woodall wasn't early.

As a runner, Woodall started late in life. He was active and had been an avid tennis player, but was still dissatisfied with his condition and decided to try running. This led him to have an interest in volunteering for the ATC, for which his first race as a volunteer was the Twilight Grand Finale 5K at the Atlanta Water Works in the mid-1980s. He was hooked. For the last quarter-century he has dedicated countless Saturday mornings to helping put on Atlanta Track Club events,

in addition to numerous other non-race day efforts. Other volunteers have ATC careers that span similar time periods, but Woodall would have to be considered an all-timer.

"Frank is a great worker with a great attitude—a great guy to have on your side," says ATC volunteer Jack Fishman. Ray Ganga, another volunteer with similar longevity within the ATC, says, "He is a very kind, genial kind of guy. He's tough and incredibly hardworking. You treat him straight and he'll be your friend forever." Don Arnold, who succeeded Frank in 2001 as Volunteer of the Year, agrees. "Frank is incredibly conscientious and very experienced. He has some definite opinions on how to do things, but they come out of a sense of him wanting to do things the right way and doing what is best for the race or the event. He knows what he wants and how to get there."

One of Frank's few faults is a certain stubbornness. He does not like to hear that he can't do something or—heaven forbid—is too old for an activity. In his mid-70s, he can still outwork most college students and is happy to prove it. "Frank had back surgery a few years ago," says former ATC Board President Tom Rehg. "His running days seemed to be behind him. Then he rehabbed and went back to running, including several marathons—in his 70s."

Frank Woodall and his wife Pat have been married for more than 50 years and have two daughters and a son, as well as more grandchildren than NASA could calculate. After many years in the insurance business, he and a partner formed D&S Plants, a successful business that supplies and maintains plants for lobbies, waiting rooms and offices. One of Frank's traditional volunteer functions has been to help procure the flowers presented to finishers at the Atlanta Women's 5K.

Frank Woodall is unique in the Atlanta Track Club family for his longevity and willingness to do whatever it takes to produce an event. There are a select few volunteers with a similar pedigree to Frank's: we owe them all a debt of thanks for helping the Atlanta Track Club become what it is today. If there is ever a Hall of Fame for ATC volunteers, Frank Woodall will surely be a charter member. ●