

Terry Fox: A Canadian Hero

Introduction:

(1958–81). Canadian Terry Fox became a national hero when he fought a courageous battle against cancer. He raised millions of dollars for cancer research through his Marathon of Hope, a race across Canada. He lost his battle before he could finish the race, but his efforts inspired many people.

Early Life:

Terrance Stanley Fox was born on July 28, 1958, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His family moved to Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, when he was 10. There he did well in school and became a good athlete. In 1977 he was a student at Simon Fraser University when he discovered that he had cancer. One of his legs had to be amputated, or cut off, above the knee.

Marathon of Hope:

Fox soon learned to run again using an artificial leg. By 1979 he was able to run a marathon—a race of a little more than 26 miles (42 kilometers). A few months later he came up with a plan to run all the way across Canada in order to raise money for cancer research. He called his run the Marathon of Hope. It began in Saint John's, Newfoundland, on April 12, 1980.

At first Fox did not get much attention or money, but he continued to run. He ran as much as 30 miles (48 kilometers) per day. By the time he entered Ontario he had gained a great deal of attention, and the donations began to build up. He passed the half-way point in eastern Ontario, but on September 1 he was forced to stop just outside the city of Thunder Bay. He had some pain in his chest, and he soon discovered that he had cancer in his lung. He had covered 3,339 miles (5,374 kilometers).

Death and Legacy:

He fought the new cancer, but it continued to spread. Fox died on June 28, 1981. The government made him a Companion of the Order of Canada before he died, and several sites around Canada were named for him. Today thousands of people take part in Terry Fox Runs in cities throughout Canada and other countries. Millions of dollars have been raised in his name.

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