

# Harry Cordellos

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Harry Cordellos resigned from a position with the San Francisco mass transit system in April 1983 to devote full time to sport. This fact might have gone unnoticed except that for Harry it was not just sport for his own recreation or the satisfaction of his competitive desires but to promote sport and physical education for the handicapped. For this man. Harry Cordellos, a skillful athlete, marathon runner. water and snow skier, world traveler is blind.

Harry's blindness came upon him slowly caused by glaucoma. During his high school years, his deteriorating eye sight and his struggle to overcome what appeared to be inevitable is a story in itself. He maintained good grades while participating in many of the typical high school activities: student council. talent club. and the band. Sheer determination got him through high school and the complicated drills of the marching band. he played tenor sax and many times had to depend on his memory in order to play his part and to find his place in the formation. His eyes would vacillate between relatively good vision and very difficult blurred vision. Eventually Harry had to face the inevitability of blindness.

After high school he lapsed into a period of depression and inactivity, He emerged from this due to the efforts of his family friend who encouraged him to continue his education at a training center for the blind. Under careful supervision Harry learned a variety of skills (traditional and non-traditional) which he had never dreamed possible - Braille. traveling with a white stick, even operating power tools.

The door to opportunity seemed to open for Harry when, on an excursion to a lake, he was encouraged to try water skiing! After a few unsuccessful efforts. Harry finally made it "UP" and, in his own words, was ". . . following a golden path of sunlight" all he could distinguish with his eyes. But the feeling of gliding along, somewhat independently. on the water and realizing the joy of this accomplishment suggested to Harry that blindness might be an inconvenience but it did not (and should not) limit the scope of his activities.

From that first water skiing experience, Harry's athletic career had led him to try a variety of sports. He has been successful in running-the Boston marathon. the Marine marathon. the Bay to Breakers race, the Dipsea, even the Iron Man contest. He has continued his water skiing participating as a guest demonstrator at Cypress Gardens; he has even skied 31 miles to Catalina to raise money for a project for the blind.