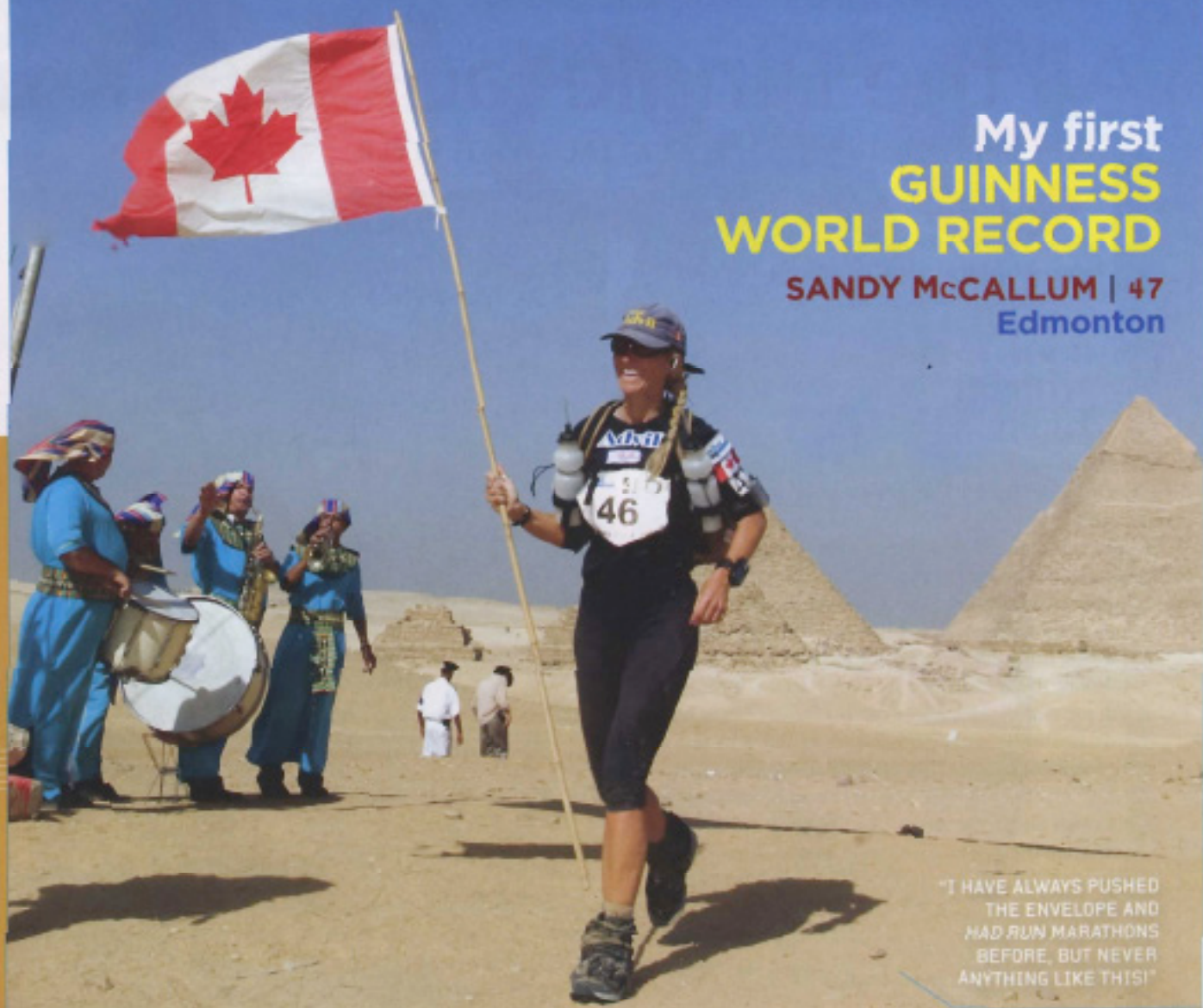


* firsts after 40

My first GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

SANDY McCALLUM | 47
Edmonton



"I HAVE ALWAYS PUSHED THE ENVELOPE AND HAD RUN MARATHONS BEFORE, BUT NEVER ANYTHING LIKE THIS!"

"When I was young, my father was a fighter pilot in the Canadian Forces, so we lived all over the world — including in Sardinia. That's where I first fell in love with the sun and sand.

"Then when I was in my forties and working as a TV reporter, I realized that something was missing from my life. I decided to quit my job, but didn't know what to do next. One day, I read about a 240-kilometre ultra-marathon through the desert in Morocco. While I've travelled a lot, I had never been to Africa and always felt drawn there. I decided to take a chance on the race. I thought if I could complete this challenge, I would be physically, mentally and spiritually tough enough to take on anything."

"I have always pushed the envelope and had run marathons before, but never anything like this! When I landed in Morocco, I breathed in the air and felt as if I were finally home. I loved the land, the culture and the racing commun-

ity. Even though I came down with dysentery and wasn't able to finish the race, I was hooked.

"It was a second chance at life for me. I had found my passion and suddenly had hope. Since that first race in 2000, I'm now one of the few people in the world who makes a living at this little-known sport.

"Each of us has the ability to go after what we want if we learn to trust ourselves. It takes hard work, sacrifice and discipline. In 2007, I set the Guinness World Record for the most desert races in one year — I ran six, which amounts to 1,400 kilometres.

"Age is not a barrier to going after dreams. We live in a wonderful era when we can have one, two, three careers in a lifetime: We can be mothers, caregivers, career women, athletes... anything! We just have to find out what it is that makes us happy." — AS TOLD TO KATHRYN HUDSON