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US OLYMPIAN, LONGTIME ANALYST TOLLEFSON RECEIVES 2026 MARSH NELSON MEDIA AWARD

Has Worked as Grandma's Marathon Race Analyst for 15 Years

(DULUTH, MINN.) – Former US Olympian and longtime Grandma's Marathon broadcast analyst Carrie Tollefson has been named the 2026 Marsh Nelson Media Award recipient, the organization announced today.

Tollefson is a Minnesota native who set a state record with 13 individual high school championships, five in cross country and eight in track and field. In college at Villanova, she was a 5-time NCAA champion and was named the 1998 NCAA Indoor Track Athlete of the Year.

In 2004, Tollefson won the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in the 1,500-meters and qualified for the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics.

Tollefson started her broadcasting career in the early 2010s, highlighted in the early years by her self-produced podcast called *C Tolle Run*. She's served in the analyst role for Grandma's Marathon for 15 years, offering insights and commentary on both radio and television during the race day broadcast.

"I have four weekends a year that are non-negotiable on my schedule, and Grandma's Marathon is one of them," Tollefson said.

Tollefson has built a media career that rivals her running career, now routinely working with other big marathons like New York City, Chicago, and Boston on networks like NBC, ABC, and ESPN. She also was invited to work on the NBC broadcast team for the 2024 Paris Summer Olympics.

Still, she keeps coming back to Grandma's Marathon and says getting her start in Duluth will always make this a special place.

"It's not just about letting me on the mic, it's about letting a female on the mic," Tollefson said. "I'm really proud of it. I've been watching other deserving people receive this award, and I can honestly



say that I wanted it. I'm very thankful to be part of Grandma's Marathon, and I'm so honored to be receiving it."

While Tollefson is busy during the marathon and half marathon on Grandma's Marathon weekend, she does typically find time to run the William A. Irvin 5K and has won that race five times, still an all-time record.

Tollefson was officially presented with her 2026 Marsh Nelson Media Award on Wednesday, May 20 at a dinner and ceremony at the St. Louis County Depot in Duluth.

MARSH NELSON MEDIA AWARD

2026 – Carrie Tollefson, *Race Analyst*

2025 – Clint Austin, *Duluth News Tribune*

2024 – Jerry Thoreson, *Destination Duluth*

2023 – Chris Allen, *Townsquare Media*

2022 – Deb Messer, *WDIO TV*

2019 – Jake Benson, *Proctor Journal*

2018 – John Gilbert, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*

2017 – Howie Hanson, *HowieHanson.com*

2016 – Bob King, *Duluth News Tribune*

2015 – Townsquare Media

2014 – Marathon & Beyond

2013 – Dan Moller, *Duluth News Tribune*

2012 – Pat Cadigan, *KDAL Radio*

2011 – Running Times Magazine

2010 – David Jensch, *KBJR TV*

2009 – Mark Stodghill, *Duluth News Tribune*

2008 – Tom Hansen, *KBJR TV*

2007 – Barbara Reyelts, *KBJR TV*

2006 – Chuck Curtis, *Duluth News Tribune*

2005 – Rik Jordan, *KDAL Radio*

2004 – Bruce Brothers, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*

2003 – Bob Rich, *KBJR TV*

2002 – Bruce Bennett, *Duluth News Tribune*

2001 – Kerry Rodd, *KDAL Radio*

2000 – Marsh Nelson, *KDLH TV* & Kevin Pates, *Duluth News Tribune*

For any questions or interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at zach@grandmasmarathon.com.

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ABOUT GRANDMA'S MARATHON



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Grandma's Restaurant Co. | Holiday Inn & Suites | Jamar | maurices | Michelina's | Michelob Ultra | Minnesota Pork Board | Minnesota Power/ALLETE
Napa Auto Parts | Northland FAN 106.5 | Powerade ION4 | Storm Creek | Stryker | Super One Foods | WM | WDIO/WIRT-TV

Started by a local group of runners in 1977, Grandma's Marathon has grown from just 150 participants its first year to now one of the largest and best-known marathons in the United States. Widely regarded as a world class event with small town charm, our race has now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K to its weekend offerings.

With all three races combined, our race weekend welcomes more than 20,000 participants – usually from all 50 states and from 70+ different countries – and brings with it close to \$40M of economic impact to the region.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma's Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the marathon. As the popularity of Grandma's Marathon weekend has grown, our mission has stayed the same – to organize, promote, and deliver annual events and programs that cultivate running, educational, social, and charitable opportunities to our communities.

Grandma's Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 10-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



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