

86-year-old physician wreaks havoc on running trail

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swimming one-half mile to cool off after each workout. He races about twice monthly and was scheduled to compete in a world masters meet in Rome in late June.

He has run eight marathons, with a best time of approximately 3:59:00 for the 1978 Avenue of the Giants marathon in northern California. Although he still clinched a gold medal for participants over age 80, Dr. Spangler labeled his most recent marathon effort of approximately 5:22:00 "terrible."

He is considering tackling the San Francisco marathon in August and/or the Marine Corps marathon in Washington, D.C., in November.

LONG BEFORE his running days, Dr. Spangler was acting Navy chief of surgery, a post he held at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. After a brief return to private practice, he rejoined the Navy, retiring from it in 1959. He spent two years with Project Hope, then was a prison surgeon at the California Men's Colony until his 1969 retirement.

Now, Dr. Spangler, a 1923 Harvard Medical School graduate, tries to "avoid work as much as possible." In addition to running, he belongs to a barbershop quartet — to keep his voice active — and maintains his yard.

"I lecture a lot to service club groups around the country," he added. The topic is always coronary heart disease — its cause and prevention. When he talks to older groups, he gears that topic toward enhancing the golden years. "It's the same old story — just encouraging people to have a proper lifestyle if they want to avoid the degenerative conditions of old age.

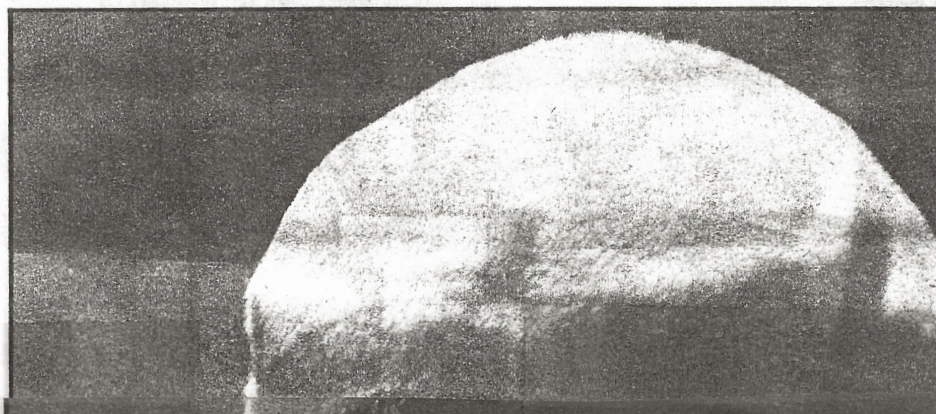
"The older group can still advance their declining years by minding the same rules that we preach to the kids. I'm convinced that any person at any age — by increasing his aerobic activity, controlling weight and diet, and throwing the cigarets out —



Photos: Wally Tokarz/AMN

in this opportunity to compete with your peers. If you deny them that, then you have denied them the incentive to continue with their activity. We have to make these people know that they can continue to be physically active with great benefits for them and their health throughout all of their life," he said.

"I want to demonstrate that I can be running at 90, 95, and 100. I want to demonstrate to the people that here's an old bug who should be buried but is still



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