

Dan Mercurio, (COM'10), director of marketing and strategy for BU Athletics

I began my attempt at writing this request a week ago. It has been incredibly difficult for me to put this into words. Such is the case with a lot of things that evoke strong emotion. I want so badly to make sure I do this justice. For Lu, and for BU. Lu Lingzi and I were just a few hundred feet apart when everything took such a tragic turn last year. Having just crossed the finish line in my second consecutive Boston Marathon, it was a moment surrounded by utter exhaustion, relief, and happiness turned to shock, disbelief, and mayhem in an instant. To learn that anyone had been hurt or killed so senselessly was simply unreal. To learn a fellow Terrier was among the ones who died made it all even more painful.

I was working in the Dean of Students Office in the George Sherman Union last year at the time of the bombing (I now work in the Athletics department), and can remember getting back to work a week later and hearing about the plans for Lu's memorial in the Metcalf Ballroom. I will never forget what a beautiful tribute it truly was. What will never be lost for me, was the speech that Lu's father gave and how I realized that BU needed Lu's family just as much as they may have needed us. We had each lost a family member and in a time of intense grief and sadness, we came together in her honor.

To say it would mean everything to run for Lu would be a huge understatement. I grew up in Boston just feet from campus, with a father who spent 38 years as an administrator. Between my two brothers and sister, we have five degrees from BU in our name and will have two more in a few short months. I've spent the last three years as a member of the BU staff, and this is my home. Running the last two marathons and hitting Beacon Street to see my friends and family was amazing. To wear the BU logo across my chest meant so much. But this year, running the marathon for Lu would represent so much more. It would represent the legacy of a young woman with tremendous potential who was, still is, and will continue to be a part of the family. The Boston University family. I hope you'll consider giving me the chance to run for Lu.

Thank you.

Watch Dan Mercurio's interview with Ann Curry here: <http://youtu.be/5XIHgXCYxsU>

Andrew Duffy, a College of Arts & Sciences master lecturer in physics

The Boston Marathon changed my life, and it would be a privilege to be able to run Boston again in honor and memory of Lu Lingzi. In all likelihood, I would never have come to work at BU if it wasn't for the marathon. Running road races as a kid in Canada, I had a dream of winning Boston, just like Bill Rodgers. I certainly never got good enough to win, but I was at least able to qualify to run Boston (it took three tries). I, like many runners around the world, viewed Boston as the one marathon in the world I needed to run, to be part of all that history.

My first Boston Marathon was in 1995. That March, I came to Boston for the first time ever, to do a training run with some friends. I met a woman on that run, who I would later run part of the 1995 Boston Marathon with, and we started a long-distance relationship. I was still in Canada—she was in Boston—but I was finishing my graduate work that summer and applying for jobs. Because of this relationship, I focused on the Boston area, and convinced BU to hire me that fall. The rest, as they say, is history. This is my 19th year at BU, in the department of physics, which just happens to have the 25th mile marker of the marathon right outside the back door. I have run Boston four times (1995, 1997, 1999, and 2000), married that fellow runner, and had three kids; none of that would have happened without the Boston Marathon. My wife says she knew we could be married when we were able to run a whole marathon together (the 1997 race) and still be speaking to one another at the end.

For me, the Boston Marathon has always had a mystique, with so much history, and the fact that you couldn't just show up and do it (although there is a history of that, too); you had to qualify. It's the marathon of 118 years of history, of Bobbi Gibb and Katherine (K. V.) Switzer smashing the gender barrier, of wheelchair racing, and epic battles over 26.2 miles (42.2 km) of pavement from Hopkinton to Boston. My years of connection to the marathon led me to create an iOS app (BOS26pt2), which includes recent race results, some history, details about key people, things like that. Between family commitments and work commitments, it doesn't have nearly as much content as I would like, but one thing I made sure to include when I updated it last summer was a small tribute to Martin Richard, Krystle Campbell, BU's own Lu Lingzi, and MIT police officer Sean Collier. I wanted to make sure that they would not be forgotten.

The events of Patriots Day last year struck particularly close to home for me. Among other things, I ran across that finish line myself on four occasions; I buy my running shoes at the Marathon Sports store that is right there; and my commute home from BU takes me right past the finish line a few times each week. On top of that, I took my family to watch the marathon that day, as is our habit each year, and at the end of the day I was incredibly thankful that we had gone to watch the start in Hopkinton, and not the finish in Boston.

Despite what happened last year (in many cases, because of what happened last year), this year, on April 21, tens of thousands of runners will show up at the starting line in Hopkinton, resolved more than ever to make it to the finish line in Boston. Many times that many spectators and family members will line the route, encouraging all of those runners every step of the way. The focus of the marathon will be on the triumph of the human spirit. Collectively that day the runners will cover close to one million miles, and will be forever changed.

The Boston Marathon has already changed my life, but it would be an honor and a privilege to be able to run for Lu Lingzi, and to be changed once again in the process. I would also like to share with her family my own very positive perspective of what Boston means, with all its history and its ability to draw runners from all over the world who have to come to Boston to see exactly who they are and what they're made of. Eleven weeks is not nearly enough time to prepare for Boston, and if I were running for myself I wouldn't consider it.

I think that running for Lingzi, though, will somehow make it possible. Thank you, to the Lu family, for the possibility.

Shuheng Lin (GRS'16)

I am a PhD student at the economics department. I did not know Lingzi on a personal level, but like her, I am also an international student from China. I still have vivid memories of what happened on April 15, 2013, and the events that followed suit, especially those in the international student community. However, what etched even deeper into my heart was how BU, how the entire city of Boston, came together to help each other heal; how the Lu family, despite the tragic loss of their daughter, came out to share what a beautiful soul she was. Her passion for life and lovely personality will never be forgotten, and her legacy will be carried on through the Lu Lingzi Scholarship Fund set up by Boston University.

I have decided to apply for one of the five spots to run in this year's Boston Marathon, not just because it is THE opportunity to honor Lu Lingzi and other bombing victims, but also because the sport has a very special meaning to me. I picked up running [my] second year into the graduate program, when I was under a lot of stress and was near the point of quitting. At first it was just a way to clear my head, to de-stress, but it offers so much more. Running helps me reflect on and get in touch with things that matter; it allows me to come to terms with my limitations but at the same time cultivate tenacity and positive energy.

In 2012, I ran the Chicago marathon with a playlist consisting of songs that reminded me of my experiences in this country: the individuals I met along the way who changed me for the better. If I am given the opportunity to run in this year's marathon, I know exactly what that tribute playlist is going to be, and I am sure it will be one shared by many on that day.

Watch Shuheng Lin's video here: <http://youtu.be/adso4y7SXMg>

Baiyun Yao (GRS'15)

I am a Chinese female student as well as a running lover! Running is no more than just daily exercise till I watched the movie *Spirit of the Marathon*. "When you cross the finish line, no matter how slow or fast, it will change your life forever." I was so curious about the feeling that something happened can really change your life. And that's the first blast leading my way to marathon. Things were getting serious later. I commit myself to some well-scheduled 40-week plan, register to a running club, and read more about how to do a long-distance run in a scientific way.

I was there at 2013 Boston Marathon, cheering for my friends who ran the race, and it was really tragic day. I left race course before bomb explosion. When I came back home, I got hundreds of phone calls, texts, and emails checking about me. I felt that I was so lucky and

so beloved, meanwhile, I also felt deeply sad and shocked that Lingzi, the other similar-age Chinese student, got killed in the bombing. All those feelings came up together and made me rethink about the life. What's the meaning of life? What are the most important things in life and what we should do in order to cherish life more? Many, many questions and thoughts came to my mind, which I never think about it before. The reason we race isn't so much to beat each other, but to be with each other. I believe running the Boston Marathon 2014 is the best way to honor Lu Lingzi. I hope I can [get] the chance to do that, for Lingzi, for all the people who love life! Life is short. Run long!

Yujue Wang (CAS'15, SMG'15)

Running has always been my calling. Ever since the tragic event that shocked all of us at the Boston Marathon last year, running has bestowed even more special meaning to me. I feel obliged to commit myself to cross the finish line of the Boston Marathon in honor of an inspiring role model and a beloved friend, Lingzi Lu. Not only are we both members of the BU community, but Lingzi and I are strongly tied through the connection among the Chinese student community at BU. I have great empathy with Lingzi, as we are both in our early twenties, living thousands of miles away from home. I know that it is not always easy to be independent, to be strong, like Lingzi was. While striving for our dreams in a foreign land, the hardship and sorrow we encounter are more than words can explain.

It could not be denied that the similarities between us have subtly brought me closer to Lingzi. We have both been chasing the same career dream of becoming a financial professional. Her unrelenting work ethic inspires me and is worth to be passed on to future students. While she has excelled in demanding course work and her music pursuit, I have been working on a dual degree in economics and finance. Both of us have learned to find a balance between challenging course loads and enjoyable hobbies. Besides our resonance in our academic field, we also have gone through similar experience being far away from our family and hometown, struggling to live on our own. As college students that have a special love for food, both Lingzi and I are not the most talented chefs. I understand what it takes for us to gradually grow into mature and independent individuals.

And now, we have to face the fact that there is nothing that could be done to relieve this immense loss and bring back Lingzi. But it is important for me to honor her achievements and keep her in our memory. We should carry on her dream with passion and continue to live strongly. I have prepared myself for this marathon with hundreds of miles of training in the past two years and wait for the right time to turn myself from an avid runner to a marathoner. And now, even though her passing was a tragic yet unforgettable event, it has become my motivation and drive to reach the finish line of a marathon. She had once been there, standing right by the finish line. She witnessed the accomplishments of each runner, was there to cheer them on and show her respect to this extremely demanding sport. Her sacrifice of her life in threat of human evil will forever live in my heart and the hearts of those around the world.

Watch Yujue Wang's video here: <http://youtu.be/QRWrc3eSy9M>

Ryan Shea (SAR'11)

Boston has always been a deep part of my life, having grown up just south of the city. Teams like the Patriots and Celtics were in my blood, and Boston events like the marathon were prevalent throughout my childhood. As a competitive athlete, I understood and respected the commitment and strength that these elite runners had, and thus dreamed about the opportunity to run the marathon myself someday. Playing the position on the soccer field that requires the most running, I was always in good physical shape and considered it a possible feat for me. I was honored and proud to attend Boston University on an athletics scholarship to play for the men's varsity soccer team. I fell in love with the school and the BU community, and went on to grow deep roots within the University. In addition to athletics, I was involved in the BU and Boston community through the Student Athlete Advisory Council, a group of student-athletes that performs community service activities in the Boston area, as well as running soccer programs with Boston Latin High School.

Each year I would attend the Boston Marathon and celebrate the athletic accomplishment of the runners by enthusiastically cheering them on and supporting them from the sidelines, making it seven years that I've watched the participants run down Comm Ave and Beacon Street. I've enjoyed cheering on the runners each year, especially when friends are running. Last year I had five close friends run the marathon, one of which was my cousin. She was never a runner; while in high school she was a competitive dancer, so running was foreign to her. Nonetheless, she trained each and every day to get ready for her run. I was so amazed by her dedication and motivation that I planned to run the marathon the following year.

I was in Kenmore Square last April during the 2013 Boston Marathon when the horrible attack was committed. I witnessed countless runners stop and walk in the opposite direction, their faces completely emotionless, totally drained from the 25 miles they had already run. I had heard that there was an incident at the finish line, but knew none of the details. I then heard that people had been injured due to a blast that went off, and my immediate reaction was to move toward Copley, as my family was planning to be near the finish line when my cousin crossed. Eventually I found my family, including my cousin Sarah, who was unable to finish the marathon due to the attack. I remember having trouble sleeping that night, knowing how many people had been affected by the bombings. In between calls and meetings during work the following day, I learned more and more about the families and the stories of those affected. Those stories, and the dedications to each one of the victims truly touched me.

I left work that day, and headed straight to the gym, beginning my workout with my typical one-mile treadmill warm up. Distracted by watching the news during my run, I finally looked down after 35 minutes to find that I had run five miles. At that moment, a crazy thought popped into my head: Could I run an entire marathon? Without any training, I ended up running a complete marathon, a total of 26.56 miles, on the treadmill that night. I started at roughly 7:15 p.m. and ended right before midnight. I wanted to do something to show my appreciation for the runners, the victims, the families, the first responders, and

bystanders who helped save numerous lives that day, and for the whole city of Boston. It saddened me that people within the BU community, a community that was so close to my heart, was affected by the attacks. One of those people, Lu Lingzi, lost her life that day, which hit very close to home. I wanted to finish the race for those who couldn't, especially for my cousin Sarah. I figured, why wait for next year, and wanted to do something at that very moment.

I put a video together with the help of a friend and was able to use Facebook as a platform to get my message out. I wanted to inspire others to do the same, to do anything to help our city through the hard times and terrible suffering we were facing. The goal was to have people donate to the victims through online organizations, and I was amazed by the response I received: people I hadn't spoken to in years contacted me to tell me how inspiring my run was, and I even had a couple tell me about their marathon training stories where they were going to give up, due to illness or injury, but were going to continue with their program. I was surprised to think that I could have such an impact on others' lives.

With that said, I would be deeply honored and humbled to run for Lu Lingzi this year. I would love to be able to dedicate my run to Lu, as well as to Krystal Campbell, Martin Richard, Sean Collier, and all of those injured and impacted that day. I want to run for those who couldn't finish last year, and for those who cannot this year. I want to run for Boston University, my proud alma mater and a place that has given me so much. I want to run for the city of Boston. I have been very lucky to remain healthy and in good physical shape throughout my life, and I hope to make Boston even stronger and prouder than ever on April 21, 2014.

Watch Ryan Shea's video here: <http://youtu.be/qoPqlPKPsdo>

Jennifer Carter-Battaglino (SED'03), an instructor of a FitRec marathon class

The Boston Marathon was my first marathon, and it has held a special place in my heart since I first stepped across the starting line (and finish line) in 2007. I have since run Boston two other times, once as a qualifier and once with my stepson so that he could run his first marathon.

In order to share my love for running Boston, I started helping students in the BU community train for the race. One day I came across an article in *Runner's World* about universities that offered marathon classes. Immediately I thought, "Why doesn't BU have a marathon training class? I mean one of the most popular marathons in the world runs right through BU's campus!" I knew right away that I wanted to expand my knowledge and help any BU student who wanted to run Boston train to run it safely.

Six years later, I have coached approximately 100 BU students to successfully complete the Boston Marathon. I did not run Boston last year, but was at the finish line an hour before the bombs went off. I had students, family, and friends who were running the marathon as well as working in the medical tent. When I heard what happened and turned on the news to see so many people trying to help those who were trapped in that area, I burst into tears.

In my mind, the Boston Marathon was a race that brought people together from all over the world, and someone had just taken that away from us.

After the initial shock, I got angry and stood behind Boston as we continued to come together and get stronger. For all of us here in Boston, the week after was just as difficult as the day of the actual bombing. We were frightened and sad and broken, but our community stood strong and bonded in the face of it all. We became determined to overcome the hatred and evil and came together in harmony and love for each other and our city. I was so proud of Boston and knew that the 2014 marathon was going to be the greatest Boston Marathon yet.

The night we were released from lockdown, I gathered with my family and BU family, not to celebrate—too many people had lost lives, limbs, or faith—but rather in solidarity, love, and compassion for those people it touched in ways we could not imagine. When I saw my son, he hugged me and burst in to tears. He had lost a good friend, Sean Collier, the MIT police officer who was shot and killed. I am proud that my son will be running Boston for Sean's team this year, right along Sean's sister.

I vowed to run the 2014 Boston Marathon the day of the bombing last year, even if I have to run my first bandit race. I will be part of the community that stands strong and I will run it for all of those who were affected by the tragedy. I did not know Lingzi, but I was at the forum BU held for her after she died and I was impressed with the number of people who came together in support of her, her roommate, and her family. I knew right away that she must have been a special person. At that time, I volunteered to coach anyone who wanted to train for Boston and run in Lingzi's name, but it was too soon after the loss of such a beautiful life for her community to even think about.

It humbles me to learn that her family has donated five numbers to the BU community. It is such a thoughtful gesture. I would be honored to run for Lingzi, but if there are others who knew her, or are more closely associated with her or her family, I would like the numbers to go to them. I am honored to be able to help in any way that I can and hope that those who do receive numbers take me up on my offer to voluntarily train them for the race. Even for those who didn't know her, Lingzi will always hold a special place in our hearts, especially on the day of the marathon. Team Lu for BU will make Lingzi's family proud as they run the 26.2 miles in her memory.