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Cyclist forges a PATH to get metro bike trails

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When Ed McBrayer returned to Atlanta in 1986 after nearly 20 years away, the avid cyclist noticed something was missing.

"There were no bike paths, no bike trails, and just a whole lot of sidewalks," said McBrayer, 64. "I couldn't ride my bike anywhere, and I got frustrated."

So he did something about it. With fellow biking enthusiasts Pete Pellegrini and Maxine Rock, McBrayer created the PATH Foundation in 1991 to build greenway trails throughout the city.

Having come from Denver, which McBrayer said had hundreds of miles for bike riders, he and PATH set out to increase pedestrian traffic, reduce pollution from vehicles and build trails connecting Atlanta's Olympic venues.

paign, PATH raised \$5.7 million to match \$15 million from public sources to build about 30 miles of trails, according to its Web site.

McBrayer, who has a degree in aerospace engineering from Georgia Tech, is the executive director of the foundation.

"The PATH Foundation is largely Ed's doing," said Rock, former PATH vice president and board member. "Ed is one of the few people in the world I know who does exactly what he says he'll do, exactly when he said he'll do it."

On weekends, you can find McBrayer biking up to 40 miles a day on trails like Silver Comet through Smyrna. During the week when he's not working with PATH, he teaches spinning in Atlanta fitness clubs.

"This isn't a second job; it's more for fun," he said.

► Please see **PATH, C3**



BECKY STEIN / Special
Ed McBrayer, 64, the executive director of the PATH Foundation, rides on the Silver Comet Trail in Smyrna on a recent Sunday.

PATH, a nonprofit that works with local governments to build greenway trails, built nearly 20 miles in time for the 1996 Olympics and has created 110 miles and nearly 20

trails in the metro area since it began. The foundation raises funds through donations from the public, which are often matched by government sources. In a 2002 cam-

PATH: Cyclist drives others to get in shape by teaching spin classes

► Continued from C3

He came to group fitness by accident. The former NASA engineer and homebuilder taught his first class in the mid-1970s when an aerobics teacher was a no-show.

"So I made an attempt to teach the class, which I'm sure I wouldn't want to see on tape," he said.

He landed his first gig with the Richard Simmons' Anatomy Asylum in 1976 while living in Denver. The rooms were decked out with disco balls and loud music, he said, the right stuff to keep him pumped. He likes alternative rock for active classes, and chooses trance music for long hauls.

"I'm sort of a wannabe DJ," McBrayer said. "I love to make my own CDs and find the right music for different classes that make them want to move."

At a recent spin class in a Midtown club, McBrayer surveyed his students, most in their 20s and 30s. Some looked tired, others dogged, but most kept their eyes on McBrayer, who pedaled effortlessly. As they biked, McBrayer entertained with one-liners such as "A hundred calories down, you just brought yourself a beer!" and commanded students to push "half a click up" on their bikes.

"I can't tell you the rush you get from encouraging people to work out harder than they normally would," McBrayer said. "I love when people come up to me after class and say how 'I can hardly walk.'"



BECKY STEIN / Special

"Until I walk by a mirror, I think I'm a kid. I can do anything now that I did in my 20s and 30s," Ed McBrayer says.

MEET ED McBRAYER

► **Favorite tune for a fast-paced workout:** "U+Ur Hand" (Beat Cult Remix) by Pink or "Silence" (DJ Tiesto's Remix) by Delerium, featuring Sarah McLachlan

► **Last book he read:** "The FairTax Book" by Neal Boortz and John Linder

► **Favorite bike trail in or near Atlanta:** Silver Comet, west of Rockmart

► **What he eats before a long biking haul:** Something light; less weight to haul along.

► **Favorite magazine:** "Airliners"

► **Last film he watched:** "Nim's Island" (with the grandkids)

► **Favorite Atlanta neighborhood:** Mine — Oak Grove in DeKalb County

► **Guilty pleasure:** Pecan Cluster Blizzard at Dairy Queen

younger people, McBrayer said he doesn't usually notice the age difference.

"Until I walk by a mirror, I think I'm a kid," he said. "I can do anything now that I did in my 20s and 30s."

Rock said she has struggled through a few of his weight-lifting classes, explaining she long ago quit trying to keep his pace. That's the same problem she faces when working with him on PATH issues as well.

"He's not easy to work with because he's hard to keep up with," she joked. "He has an engineer's mind and Superman's ability ... it's almost unbeatable!"

Although many of his exercise classes are filled with