



Catching My Breath

The Life and Races of Athlete Ken Thomas

Synopsis

This one-hour documentary profiles wheelchair athlete Ken Thomas, and his determination to participate in the World Masters Games. It is also about his life-long fight for inclusion and independence as a person with a physical disability.

Catching My Breath profiles the life and races of Ken Thomas. It shares Ken's experience of training and competing internationally as a team member of the Alberta and Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Associations. In the 1980s and 90s, he attended the Paralympics and World Track and Field Championships for the Disabled, retiring from international competition in 1994. But when he learns the World Masters Games are coming to his home town of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, he is determined to make a comeback.

Catching My Breath provides context for Ken's life as a wheelchair athlete by revisiting his past. Filmmaker Lorna Thomas uses photographs, archival film footage, and narrative commentary to paint an intimate portrait of her brother.

We see Ken lobbying for affordable housing at the Legislature, inspecting accessible buildings, wheelchair square-dancing, and celebrating life with his close-knit support system of family and friends. Lorna and Ken also take a road trip to southern Alberta to interview childhood friends and teachers, including 100-year-old physiotherapist Clara Smith. The journey reveals how societal attitudes, institutional policies, and the strong support of determined parents have impacted Ken's life over the past 50 years.

But ***Catching My Breath*** is not just a retrospective. What drives this film forward is Ken's fight to compete one last time in an international track competition. Will he succeed?

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