



Specializing in Kilimanjaro Treks
and Tanzania Safaris/Adventures

DETERMINED YOUTH

Simon Peter Mtuy was the 5th of 10 children born into his family from Marangu Mbahe Village, not far from the main entrance gate to Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania. In a large and impoverished family education was scarce and opportunities were limited, but Simon was forever determined not to let his background hold him back. After completing primary and one year of secondary school Simon needed to work to earn income for his family. Like many boys from the mountain with little formal education and few options he entered the climbing business – starting at the bottom – as a porter. At the age of 14 Simon began earning a few cents a day carrying huge loads of gear and equipment up the mountain for the foreign tourists who came to climb Kilimanjaro. Despite the rigors of the hard physical labor, Simon enjoyed the excitement of being on the mountain, working as a team, and practicing his English with the climbers. However, his father had aspirations for him to become a police officer. Using connections with relatives on the force, Simon’s father obtained a place for him at the police training academy in the town of Moshi, 30 miles away at the foot of the mountain. Though Simon had no interest in policing and eventually ran away from the school, his time at the academy was influential as it is where he began his formal training as a runner – a talent that eventually would lead him to success as a world class ultra-distance runner.

Disobeying his father’s wishes and returning home from the academy, Simon, then 18, needed to prove to his parents that he could live independently. His first task was to build for himself a humble hut on his family’s land and be self-sufficient. He returned to work as a porter and soon stood out for his strong work ethic, multiple skills, determination, and glowing personality. He overcame the rigid hierarchy on the crews and was selected as a cook on the teams going up the mountain. Although his promotion to cook was an honor, Simon really wanted to be a leader with the position of Kilimanjaro guide. He saved his small wages for the guide training course and spent his free time learning as much as he could about the mountain. He finally submitted himself for the rigorous training entailing 6 days on the mountain, followed by 3 days of classroom lessons, and a final written exam in English. Upon completion, Simon became, at age 21, the youngest person to earn his Kilimanjaro guide license.

Summit Expeditions and Nomadic Experience

P.O. Box 6491 · Kilimanjaro · Moshi · Tanzania · East Africa

Tanzania phone/fax +255-2727-53233

USA toll free 1-866-417-7661

www.nomadicexperience.com

BUSINESSMAN

Though he became a successful guide with a number of climbing companies, Simon always sought to move to the next level. While working as a junior guide Simon took it upon himself to develop his skills and expand his knowledge. Instead of spending the off season on the farm or hanging out with his friends, Simon invested in himself by using his savings to travel to Nairobi, Kenya in 1995 to enroll in English classes at the British Council and gain experience living in a foreign country. He wanted to establish his own guiding company so that he could provide clients with his own high quality service and safety. His challenge was finding capital. He saw a market in the U.S. for Tanzanite, a beautiful deep blue precious stone found underground in only a few acres of dusty hills in Northern Tanzania. So, in 1997, he purchased several stones, had them cut locally and naively sent the valuable jewels wrapped in a t-shirt via regular mail to American friends in the jewelry business whom he met climbing. Fortunately, the stones found their way to their destination. Instead of receiving cash for the Tanzanite, Simon asked his friends to purchase six expedition quality tents that he could use on Kilimanjaro – the first investment in his future business. In 1998 Simon registered his company and Summit Expeditions and Nomadic Experience (SENE) was born. From modest beginnings, his Kilimanjaro climbing and Tanzania safari company has prospered by abiding by the highest standards of comfort, health, safety, environmental ethics, and porter treatment. Simon has also been innovative in services that he offers his clients. In 1999 he began construction of guest cottages on the parcels of land he received from his father and grandfather. With the addition of three more cottages in 2003, SENE now has beautiful accommodations for up to 12 guests set amongst an organic garden on his farm. This allows his climbers to acclimatize at 6,200 feet prior to going on the mountain and to experience Tanzanian village life with a natural cross-cultural experience not available to guests in hotels.

In 2000 Simon studied at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Washington State to improve his mountain skills. After two months of intensive training he received certificates in mountaineering and as an outdoor educator in mountaineering. Still, he knew that in order to be the superior mountain guide to which he aspired he lacked advanced training in wilderness first aid. Therefore, in 2001 Simon enrolled in a Wilderness First Responder Course with Crested Butte Outdoors in Colorado. On the final exam for the certificate Simon missed the passing grade on the 50-item exam by one question. The school, sympathetic to his plight learning technical medical terminology from a fast-talking instructor using his third language (English) and impressed with his studiousness and effort, offered to award him the certificate anyway. On principle Simon refused. He returned to Tanzania, studied the materials for a year, came back the following year to enroll in the course again and re-take the exam. The second time he achieved the highest score in his class and received his hard-earned certificate. During his time at NOLS Simon learned of Leave No Trace (LNT), a non-profit organization in the United States which promotes backcountry environmental ethics. In 2006 he received training to be a LNT environmental educator and made SENE a partner organization and thereby abiding by LNT principles on all its treks up the mountain. Simon is currently trying to have the Kilimanjaro National Park Authority establish LNT principles throughout the mountain for all guide companies to follow.

Summit Expeditions and Nomadic Experience

P.O. Box 6491 · Kilimanjaro · Moshi · Tanzania · East Africa

Tanzania phone/fax +255-2727-53233

USA toll free 1-866-417-7661

www.nomadicexperience.com

COMMUNITY LEADER

As a successful businessman, Simon takes very seriously his social responsibility to those less fortunate. In 1996 he was planting trees to establish a nursery in his village for a small environmental NGO based in Moshi when he saw the need for a local community development organization. Joining forces with clients he met on the mountain who were moved by his commitment, they formed, in 1998, the *Hope Through Opportunity* (HTO) charity with partner organizations in the United States and Tanzania. His first task was to receive a shipment of educational and medical supplies collected in the U.S. and intended for distribution to schools and clinics in villages on Kilimanjaro. This required his staying in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's port city, for several weeks to negotiate the byzantine channels of the port, customs, and other government agencies to have the donations cleared and exempted from import duties. Rather than see these obstacles as a deterrent, Simon saw them as an opportunity to learn about the rules and regulations of importing goods into Tanzania. Once the donations cleared, to his dismay Simon discovered that the majority of the items had been destroyed by a fire intentionally set for insurance fraud in an adjoining container. Undiscouraged, he brought back to Kilimanjaro all that was salvageable to distribute to the schools and clinics. Since then HTO has been responsible for several more containers of donated goods, the construction of two new classrooms at a local primary school, and construction of an all-weather bridge over the river that cuts off Simon's village from the main road into Moshi.

In 1998 Simon traveled for the first time to the United States on a speaking and fund-raising tour for HTO. There he competed in his first ultra-marathon (any race longer than the standard 26.2 mile marathon distance). Since his introduction to running at the police academy, Simon trained and raced regularly, with local success as a sub-2:30 marathoner. Never one to shy away from a challenge, on a whim Simon registered for the Miwok 100 kilometer endurance run just a few days prior to the 1998 race. Starting too fast in the early miles, he built a 10 minute lead over his nearest competitor, but soon experienced the consequences of his rookie mistake and was passed by several runners. He managed to maintain his stamina for a strong top ten finish in his inaugural ultra-marathon. That one race was enough to get him hooked on the sport. Over the last 10 years Simon has made annual trips to the U.S. to compete in many of the top ultra runs in the country, including the 100-mile Western States Endurance Run, in which he has finished among the top 30 all six times he has competed. Despite the demands of climbing Kilimanjaro week after week Simon continues his intensive training by fitting in runs whenever and wherever he can. While guiding climbs up Kilimanjaro he has been known to rise early to enjoy pre-dawn runs on the slopes before the day's hike. He also finds that training runs immediately before and after long international flights help him avoid jet lag.

WORLD-RECORD HOLDER

Because of his running experience, while Simon was still employed by another climbing company in 1997 he was selected to guide a climber who was attempting the fastest ascent and descent of Kilimanjaro. The pair succeeded with a time of 19 hours. This got Simon interested

Summit Expeditions and Nomadic Experience

P.O. Box 6491 · Kilimanjaro · Moshi · Tanzania · East Africa

Tanzania phone/fax +255-2727-53233

USA toll free 1-866-417-7661

www.nomadicexperience.com

in the concept of speed climbs up Kilimanjaro. For Simon, it was never about the record, but that a record run could be a vehicle to help others. In 2004 his older brother, also a guide, died of AIDS and left his three children fatherless. This gave Simon a purpose for a record attempt. In that year he raised \$2,800 locally for his brother's children's education during his world record fastest supported ascent and descent of Kilimanjaro in 8 hours, 27 minutes. Though satisfied that the accomplishment helped his niece and nephews, Simon felt selfish for raising money only for his relations. So, he committed to making another record attempt, one that would raise funds to benefit his whole community. He talked extensively with his parents and siblings about the disease that killed his brother. Despite protests from his family to keep the cause of death quiet, Simon lifted the veil of silence to talk openly about the scourge that was taking the life of so many in his community and ripping apart the social fabric. Simon is now an outspoken advocate for HIV/AIDS awareness, education, and prevention in his community. His next record attempt was to earn money for a community center in Mbahe, in memory of his brother, for training AIDS widows and for HIV/AIDS awareness. He spent 12 days by himself on Kilimanjaro, training at different elevations to prepare for the attempt in February 2006. This run was completely unsupported as he carried all his own food and collected water from streams along the way. He made the ascent and descent in a record 9 hours, 22 minutes for an unsupported run.

Over the years Simon has made annual trips to the United States. Never letting an opportunity go to waste, these trips are always multi-faceted endeavors. He speaks regularly with school children about life in Tanzania, with outdoors enthusiasts about climbing Kilimanjaro and the beauty of a Tanzanian wildlife safari, and with any interested group about the needs of the people in his village. He has taken many courses in the States to improve his English, gain business and computer skills, and to hone his mountain and wilderness knowledge and skills. As time allowed, he took any small jobs he could find to earn additional income for his business. He has worked as a gardener and spent time in the furniture workshop of a friend to learn techniques that he could take back home with him. He has used many of his ultra-distance races as platforms on which to raise awareness of the community development needs in Tanzania and as fund-raising events for the shipment of containers for Hope Through Opportunity. In 2004 he raised funds through his races in the U.S. for the Mkombozi Home for Street Children in Moshi, followed in 2005 by fund-raising for the Amani Children's Home, another home for street children in Moshi. In 2006 he committed proceeds from his 2006 Western States Endurance Run participation to purchase the land for the Mbahe community center, on which construction is scheduled to commence in 2008.

Despite all his achievements, Simon remains as committed as ever to his many endeavors. He is growing Summit Expeditions and Nomadic Experience by adding cycling and running itineraries and opening a U.S. office to attract more visitors to his home country. The Tanzanian division of the *Hope Through Opportunity* charity is becoming independent from its American counterpart. He constantly sets new goals for himself with his ultra-distance running. His environmental work is extremely vital as every year Kilimanjaro receives more climbers, putting more stress on the fragile mountain ecosystem. Finally, Simon is adjusting to life as a new father as he and his wife Tara had a baby boy born in January, 2008.

(rev. 3/08)

Summit Expeditions and Nomadic Experience

P.O. Box 6491 · Kilimanjaro · Moshi · Tanzania · East Africa

Tanzania phone/fax +255-2727-53233

USA toll free 1-866-417-7661

www.nomadicexperience.com