
Avery Brundage

still going strong born in 1887, will be 70 during the Sofia Session on September 28th. 1957.

At its 1952 session in Helsinki, Finland, during the Games of the XV Olympiad, the International Olympic Committee elected Avery Brundage its fifth President, the first American to hold this highest office in the world of amateur sport. Mr. Brundage had been a member of the International Olympic Committee since 1936 and Vice-President since 1945.

Following this election Mr. Brundage retired as President of the United States Olympic Association and Chairman of the United States Olympic Committee, positions he had filled for twenty-five years. Six times he had been unanimously elected by the 120 organizations regulating amateur sport in the United States which compose this Association. As President he completely reorganized the U. S. O. A., placed it on a sound business basis for the first time, raised the many hundreds of thousands of dollars required to finance four Olympic teams and left it with about a million dollars in the treasury.

In Buenos Aires in 1940 he was chosen unanimously as First President of the Comité Deportivo Panamericano by the countries of the Western Hemisphere at a congress called to organize Pan American Games. The rules of this organization were changed in London at the II Congress in 1948 so he could be reelected unanimously for another term. He has served as an officer and director of many other national and international amateur sport organizations. These positions are all honorary and carry no salary ; in fact, they involve very considerable expense.

Mr. Brundage's athletic career began in 1905, when as a high school athlete he was heralded as 'the find of the season.' At the University of Illinois, from which he graduated in 1909, he was intercollegiate discus champion, member of the basketball team, and winner of a special medal for athletic achievement.

It is interesting to note that his collegiate interests were not confined to sport. Because of his high scholarship rating he was elected to the honorary societies of *Tau Beta Pi* and *Sigma Xi*. He was also editor of the college magazine and manager of the track team.

After graduation from the university Mr. Brundage, as a member of the Chicago Athletic Association team, entered all-around athletics and for 10 years, until 1918, when he won his last national championships, was one of the leading all-around athletes of the world. As a member of the 1912 United States Olympic team he competed in the Games of the Vth Olympiad at Stockholm.

Three times he was All-around Amateur Champion of America. The all-around championship is probably the most difficult test of speed, stamina, strength, agility and endurance combined, ever devised. Like the Decathlon it includes ten events but all are held on one instead of two days and the individual events are much more difficult. The Decathlon, in fact, was arranged because the All-around is too strenuous for many younger competitors.

It should be noted that, while Mr. Brundage was making this enviable record as a competitor he was also engaged in establishing his own successful construction business. His practice and training had to be done outside of working hours and had his energies not been divided perhaps his athletic record might have been even better.

After retiring from All-around competition he became interested in the administrative side of amateur sport. For many years, representing his university he served as a member and president of the alumni board which then operated the Intercollegiate Conference Athletic Association (Big Ten). In 1928 he was elected President of The Amateur Athletic Union of the United States, an office to which he was reelected for seven terms. He served longer than any other President and would probably have been continued in office even longer had he not refused nomination. During this period he was one of the leading handball players of the United States and at one time Chicago champion.

Under Mr. Brundage's leadership amateur sport in the United States enjoyed a period of tremendous growth. One of his first accomplishments was the reconciliation of the college sport authorities with The Amateur Athletic Union, thus ending a feud which had threatened to disrupt American sport. For many years he promoted a closer relationship with the Armed Forces, which have become more and more deeply interested in the Olympic programme.

In 1936, when there was an organized international movement to boycott the Olympic Games and all other countries were watching developments in the United States, he, at considerable personal sacrifice, led the furious battle to keep Olympic sport from being used

as a political weapon. Overcoming all obstacles, he organized and financed a large and victorious U. S. team and this insured the success of the Games of the XIth Olympiad.

Battling continually to keep amateur sport free from commercial and political entanglement, Mr. Brundage has been the recipient of many brickbats from those who seek to capitalize one way or another on the great international popularity of amateur sport. He is generally known not only in the United States but in fifty other countries as the apostle of amateurism and one of the world's leading exponents of fair play and good sportsmanship. In 1934 he was awarded a special James E. Sullivan trophy for "Outstanding service to amateur sport."

Mr. Brundage is an engineer by profession and has not been idle in the business world. In 1915, after serving five years with leading architects and builders, he formed his own construction firm, the Avery Brundage Company, and in the next thirty years built many millions of dollars worth of skyscrapers and other outstanding buildings in Chicago and its vicinity. His construction work led to the acquisition of real estate and buildings and to the control of several large metropolitan hotels. From time to time he has been an officer and director in many corporations and banks. After the first World War he was elected President of the Construction Division Association.

In 1949 the title of 'Excelentissimo Senor Don de Santa Barbara' was conferred on Mr. Brundage by the Chamber of Commerce of that California city for 'outstanding civic contribution'.

At the Centennial Convocation (1951) of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Mr. Brundage was presented with an award "In recognition of the impress which he has made upon his generation during a lifetime of distinguished service as a resident of one of the States which comprised the old Northwest Territory".

On March 4, 1957, its 120th Birthday, Mr. Brundage received the first newly created Medal of Merit awarded by the City of Chicago.

Mr. Brundage has travelled extensively on all five continents. He is the author of numerous articles on amateur sport. He is a collector of Oriental art and has probably one of the finest and most comprehensive private collections of Asiatic objets d'art in the world. He has served a number of years as a Trustee of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Mr. Brundage resides in Chicago, Illinois and also has a house in Santa Barbara, California.