

The Speech given by M. Armand Massard

Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee, in Lausanne Cathedral on the occasion of the funeral of the Baroness Pierre de Coubertin, on May 10th 1963

At the very moment when the entire world is about to celebrate the centenary of the birth of the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the news came of the death of the one who was his life's companion, the witness and the constant supporter of his efforts, his struggles and his work.

Madame de Coubertin, no less, since the death of her husband, was able to bear witness, more assured with every year that passed, to the triumphal edifice constructed by the man who revived the Olympic Games.

Sever had his thought, as a lover of humanity, as a moralist, historian and educationalist, shone more brightly than during the period since his death.

All over the world, as far as the most remote continents, over and above political passions and ideologies, his name — all too often unknown during his life — is revered as the apostle of the greatest effort ever made to reunite and reconcile the youth of every country and of every race and religion.

Pierre de Coubertin himself only knew this glory in his lifetime at its competition.

Madame de Coubertin, lively and alert right up to the end, knew this glory in all its importance, and she followed it with a love and fidelity which can never be denied.

Today, when she joins her husband in death, he who was our friend and our guide, she becomes a part of the man we have lost and we feel this loss bitterly.

At least she will have taken with her into the grave the certainty of the immense and many-sided work of her husband and of those whose stability defies the years, and that the disciples and the successors of Pierre de Coubertin watch over her with all the perseverance of which he gave so many examples.

I have been privileged to associate myself with the homage paid by the International Olympic Committee and that of its President, Mr. Avery Brundage — who is unable to be present — and among other bodies that of the French Olympic Committee, who claim the honour of having supported Pierre de Coubertin from the moment he started out on his chosen way.

This collaboration in the very beginning, thanks to the help of the City of Paris,

has been commemorated by the French Olympic Committee in the giving of his name to one of the finest stadiums and the inscription on the old walls of the Sorbonne in remembrance of the first time he gave expression to his plan to revive the Olympic Games.

Still more recently I was gratified that the Municipal Council of Paris had adopted the plan to affix on the walls of the stadium which bears his name the effigy of de Coubertin.

Madame de Coubertin alas, was not to see the realization of this project.

All the National Olympic Committees unite or will unite with the first protagonists of his crusade in memory of de Coubertin. To all the members of her family who surrounded Madame de Coubertin with an affection so rich in memories, the International Olympic Committee expresses its profound sympathy and the assurance of its intention of keeping faithfully the memory of the Baroness de Coubertin together with that of the man who predeceased her by twenty-six years, and who has entered into immortality.
