

Lake Placid and Olympism in mourning

Tribute to Ronald M. MacKenzie

Tragedy struck unexpectedly on 23rd December 1978 when 75 year-old Ronald MacKenzie, President of the Organising Committee for the XIIIth Winter Games, was stricken by a fatal heart attack while attending the dedication ceremony of the new 70-metre ski jump at Intervale Mountain, outside Lake Placid.

A devoted winter sports enthusiast since his youth, Mr. MacKenzie was a dominant figure in the planning and organising of the 1980 Winter Games in the village of Lake Placid which last held them in 1932. He was in the vanguard with those residents who, since 1962, worked diligently for their return.

Upon his accession to the presidency, Ronald MacKenzie began working closely with the IOC to ensure smooth co-ordination of all activities related to Lake Placid's organisation of the 1980 Winter Games. As the mainstay of this Organising Committee, he always presented an outgoing, friendly personality, and became a familiar figure to his Olympic friends, always willing to assist wherever possible,

Born in New York City, Ronald MacKenzie went to Lake Placid at the age of seven and soon gained a reputation as a speed skater in which sport he competed throughout his teenage years both locally and regionally. A member of the college swimming team, he graduated in 1926 from Brown University and soon after became interested in competitive skiing wherein he excelled both in cross-country and Alpine events. Interested in bobsleighbing, he joined a four-man team in 1932 which included his wife Anna amongst its members. In 1936, he travelled to the IVth Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

Ronald MacKenzie was a former Postmaster General of Lake Placid (1954-1969), Director of the FIS Nordic ski world championships in 1950 and President of the FISU world



1978 - R. MacKenzie (at right) and the President of the IOC.

University Games Committee in 1972. He was the coach-manager of the US Nordic ski team at the world championships held in Sweden in 1954 and a Nordic and Alpine instructor, amongst other qualifications. He not only planned the Mt. Whiteface ski development area but also the present cross-country and biathlon range trail systems.

Mr. MacKenzie was a member of the US Ski Hall of Fame and lastly a justice of the peace in the town of North Elba. The loss of this devoted sports enthusiast and outstanding community member will be felt by all.

On behalf of his many Olympic friends, the "Olympic Review" sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife, family, colleagues and numerous friends.

We now publish the last article written specifically for the "Olympic Review" by the late President of the Lake Placid Organising Committee, Mr. Ronald MacKenzie.