

Lake Placid 1980



A portrait of the new President of the OCOG

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Rev. J.B. Fell, new President of the Organizing Committee for the XIIIth Olympic Winter Games, is first of all a man's man who has become a man for all seasons. Rev. Fell, 56, a native Placidian, is a veteran of World War II and has served his community with distinction as a fireman, a law enforcement officer, a councilman on the North Elba town board and town sports director. He is an ordained methodist minister.

There never seemed to be any question in Lake Placid who would be elected to follow in the footsteps of Ronald MacKenzie who died in December. Rev. Fell, as Executive Director, had worked closely with Mr. MacKenzie and other community leaders for many, many years towards the goal that was attained in the autumn of 1974 when the International Olympic Committee designated Lake Placid to host the 1980 Winter Games.

Reverend Fell is an eloquent speaker but he is best recognized among the members of the staff of the Organizing Committee for his wit and good humor. It is said, and only partly in jest, that persons on the third floor of the administration building know when Reverend Fell arrives in the morning because of his enthusiastic and personal greetings to members of the staff.

Perhaps the outstanding trait that comes across when talking to this man is his straightforward answers and his honesty in dealing with the problems at hand. His knowledge of the winter sports and the complexities of staging the XIIIth Olympic Winter Games is second to none.

In an interview with the press following his election, Reverend Fell made these points : "If a community the size of Lake Placid can carry out that objective then we will have realized our goal". Rev. Fell said :

"Other small mountain communities will be able to follow our example in the future and stage Olympic Winter Games instead of relegating them to large cities where athletes fade into the city commerce."

This reflects Rev. Fell's chief concern : the sports and athletes. He believes that athletic endeavours are beneficial to the athletes and to the community.

"I see sports as the ultimate salvation of this community," Rev. Fell said in that same interview. "It has been said that our whole community has been captured by the Olympic ideal. There is a philosophy that the Games are a celebration of youth and sport, and whereby the Olympics Games are to be held in the spirit of competition. But we are not gearing our objectives simply to youth. We are striving to develop a program that lets athletes train and compete on the finest facilities, and thus be part of our country's commitment to the ongoing fulfillment of the Olympic ideal.