



Olympic torch relay

★ Perhaps the most dramatic moment of the Olympic Games is the first, the moment the torchbearer plunges the torch into the cauldron, thus simultaneously bringing to life the Olympic Flame and the Games themselves.

But at the XXIIIrd Olympiad which begins July 28th, 1984 in Los Angeles, the lighting of the flame will take on added, history-making significance, for the ceremony will also mark the culmination of the longest Olympic Torch Relay in history.

Beginning in New York on May 8th, and concluding during the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, as many as 10,000 Americans from all walks of life will participate in a relay that will zig-zag across the United States, covering 19,000 kilometers - nearly 12,000 miles - and passing through some 1,000 communities.

As conceived by Los Angeles Organizing Committee (LAOOC) President Peter V. Ueberroth and Vice President/General Manager Harry Usher and Chairman of the Board Paul Ziffren, the precedent-setting Torch relay was designed to create a 30 million dollar legacy for America's youth while, at the same time, giving those who desire to contribute to that legacy a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in the Olympic experience.

This will be accomplished through the "Youth Legacy Kilometers Programme". The funds will go directly to Specific-Boys Clubs of America, Girls Clubs of America and Family YMCAs and other youth groups as designated by the benefactor to enhance sports programs for boys and girls in the 12-to 17-year-old age group.

Any individual, community organization, group or business can designate a torchbearer for a "youth legacy kilometer" by making a commitment of 3,000 dollars to one of the youth organizations. The program is directed only to those youngsters who would not otherwise have an opportunity to participate in athletics. No funds will be used to assist in the competition and training of world-class ath-

letes, nor will any funds go to the LAOOC for its use.

"We want part of the legacy of the 1984 Olympic Games to be a lasting commitment to the youth of America", Ueberroth said. "We believe that local organizations, as well as individuals, businesses and other groups, will join hands to help relay the Olympic Torch across the country. They'll share in the excitement of the relay and help to open the Olympic Games - and they'll be sowing the seeds for youth athletic programs that will give youngsters opportunities to play and enjoy Olympic sports for years after the Games."

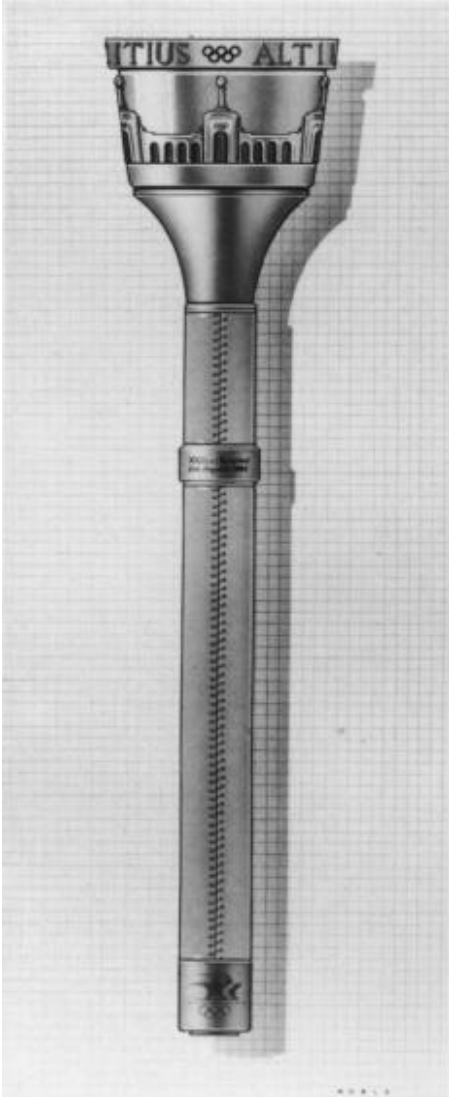
"In implementing the torch relay, we also hope to enhance the image of the Olympic Movement across the country and to spread the philosophy of Olympism in preparation for the celebration of the Games in a dignified way."

Although the tradition of the Olympic Torch dates back to the Ancient Games in Greece, it was not included in the program of the modern Olympic Games until 1928 when the Games were held in Amsterdam. And it was not until the Berlin Games eight years later that, through the efforts of Professor Carl Diem, founder of the Graduate School of Sports in Cologne, the Torch Relay was organized and run. Over a period of 12 days, three thousand runners travelled 5,758 kilometers (3,570 miles) to carry the flame from Olympia in Greece to Berlin.

The lighting of the torch in Olympia is a very well-defined procedure, based on an ancient religious ceremony. It takes place at the Altar of Zeus near the stadium where the ancient Olympic Games were held. The ceremony begins with the national anthems of Greece and the host country for the Games, followed by the "Athlete's Hymn" and speeches by the President of the Greek Olympic Committee and officials of the Organising Committee. Next, a procession of vestal virgins accompanies the High Priestess of Hera to the altar. There the High Priestess uses a concave mirror to kindle a flame using rays from the sun, while the ode, "Light Olympia", by the



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to the nearby monument to Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Modern Olympics, and lights a flame at the Olympic Altar in tribute to de Coubertin. The athlete, the first of a 675-member team, then begins the relay from Olympia to Athens.

From Athens, the Olympic Flame will be transported by airplane to New York in time for the beginning of the Olympic Torch Relay in the United States. Bill Thorpe, Jr. and Gina Hemphill, descendants of two of America's finest Olympic athletes, have been designated to carry the torch for the first kilometer. Thorpe is a grandson of Jim Thorpe, a native American who was called the "greatest athlete in the world" by King Gustav of Sweden after Thorpe won the decathlon and pentathlon at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm ; Hemphill is a granddaughter of Jesse Owens, winner of four track and field gold medals at the 1936 Olympics, in the 100 meters, 200 meters, 400-meters relay and long jump.



poet, Takis Doxas, is recited. She then presents it to an athlete who carries the torch