

Olympic Gold Medallists



VERA ČÁSLAVSKÁ

An IOC member since 1995, Vera Čáslavská is also one of the most impressive competitors in Olympic history. Representing Czechoslovakia at the Games of the Olympiad in 1960, 1964 and 1968, the young gymnast collected seven gold and four silver medals for her extraordinary performances.

From 1989 to 1992, she worked as adviser to President Vaclav Havel. Currently, Ms Čáslavská, who is a physical education instructor, is president of the Czech Olympic Committee and a member of the national and International gymnastics federations.

were organized in the open, in the Caracalla Baths. It was a wonderful experience for me. I was happy that Coubertin had managed to revive the Olympic Games and that I, a young gymnast full of great plans and aspirations, could participate.



OR : What is your earliest image of the Olympic Games?

My first Olympic Games bear the date of 1960, and they took place in Rome. The artistic gymnastics competitions

OR : What is your best memory or favourite anecdote from the Olympic Games?

The Olympic Games of Tokyo left me with one of my strongest impressions. I had the feeling that all of Japan was

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cheering me. People were unbelievably thoughtful and nice to me, and my affection for them has remained the same to this day.

OR : In your opinion, what is the significance of the Centenary of the Olympic Games?

The Centenary is a fitting occasion to reconsider the meaning of the Olympic Movement. The Olympic Games of the new era have gradually become a great event - the greatest festival ever - not only for athletes but for the whole of mankind. Atlanta and the Centennial Olympic Games will be an occasion for us to see athletes from nearly all countries of the world; and through the medium of TV, the whole world will see that it is possible to meet and

compete in a friendly spirit, without weapons or killing.

OR: What role do you feel sport and Olympism play in modern society?

It is my wish that every modern society, that of my country included, should preserve and continue to develop the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter, which I would like to recall here: “[...] Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. [...] The goal of Olympism is to place everywhere sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned

with the preservation of human dignity”.

OR : What message would you like to give to today's youth?

The youth of today has many possibilities for self-fulfilment and for enjoyment in general. What these youngsters choose to do is up to them. But a basic principle prevails, and it applies not only to sports: the precondition of success is talent and hard training.

It is my wish for all young people who set out on the journey of sport that they will experience the beautiful feeling of standing on the victory rostrum and listening to their national anthem, just as I had the chance to do years ago - I will never forget it.