

# Participants in the Olympic Games



## PIRJO HAGGMAN

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

The Finnish people are very interested in sports, and so was I during my childhood in my parents' home. My father listened with interest to the Olympic Games on the radio long before the television arrived to my village. The Olympic Games held in Rome in 1960 have stayed in my mind, and especially Wilma Rudolph, who was my hero, even if I didn't actively participate in sports at that time. I didn't see her competition on television, but the Finnish newspapers wrote about her "flying" running technique, and I was very impressed.

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

The Olympic Games in Montreal in 1976 will always remain in my mind. One reason for this is that it was there that I did my best competition ever. Maybe I have these warm memories because I lost the bronze medal position by only 1/100 of a second, and the silver medal by 3/100 of a second. I remember that when the flags were raised I thought, "my country's flag could also have been among those three flags". During the closing ceremonies in Montreal I decided to once more participate in the Olympic Games - in Moscow in 1980 - and so I did.

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

In my opinion the Olympic Movement has proved its sustained strength and power by giving the youth and people of the world the opportunity to meet during the Olympic Games for one hundred years. During this Centennial, almost every country and "corner" of the world will be touched by the Olympic message.

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

Sport and Olympic ideals have an important place in the world and in people's lives today. For youth, the educational side of Olympism is of especially great importance. In my mind children and young people must have goals and wishes, not only regarding top competition sport achievements, but also for personal fitness and health.

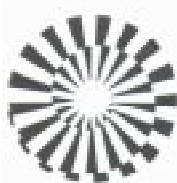
### **OR : What message would you like to give to today's youth?**

Life offers everybody many challenges and aims to strive for. Big dreams can be fulfilled, but you have to work for these and to do your very best. Often you meet with disappointment, but you can, and must, go through this. Actually, difficulties are meant to

Twelve times the Finnish champion in the 100m and 400m, Ms Haggman began competing at age fifteen. She participated in the European Championships in Athens in 1969, and again in Rome and Prague in 1974 and 1978, respectively. Meanwhile, she began representing her country at the Games of the XXI Olympiad in Montreal in 1976, placing fourth in the 400m. She participated in the Games of the XXII Olympiad in Moscow in 1980, and in 1981 she became an IOC member.

A physical education teacher, she has for twenty years been an official in the Finnish Amateur Athletic Association. She has been a member of the Finnish National Olympic Committee and its Athletes' Commission since 1981.

Ms Haggman is a member of the IOC's Pierre de Coubertin Commission.



Munich 1972



Montréal 1976



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he overcome and you can learn much from them. Your personal dreams can be focused on sport, art, the improvement of people's lives, or other things. Fight for your dreams - don't give up - and many of them will come true!



*Pirjo Haggman during the last lap of the 400m.*