

acteristics of your personality are the most important, but also because such virtues will continue beyond the end of your mandate.

I do not know if you give your confidence and your friendship easily. But what I do know is that once you have given your friendship and confidence, you are then loyal and faithful through thick and thin. You have shown this loyalty to many of our colleagues when in trouble, even if that meant exposing yourself to criticism. You have always supported them, as long as it was not truly proven that they were at fault.

You have had this same attitude of support towards the people who work for you, your directors and staff. You have never criticized them in public, even when they have erred.

On the contrary, you have always tried to save them embarrassment, to appreciate them and to support their efforts. That is why they in turn are so grateful and faithful.

One finds in you this loyalty, this faithfulness in many areas and on different levels: loyalty towards Lausanne, towards Switzerland, but also, since I am speaking here on behalf of the ASOIF, loyalty to the International Federations. Whenever your calendar permits, you never miss our championships, congresses or other events. You have always recognized our

role in the heart of the Olympic Movement. You appreciate the value of our contribution to the Olympic Games. You know that without us, there would not be any Olympic Games and you never try to hide that reality. You say so and you demonstrate it to us with a never failing support.

We know, Mr President, that we have been privileged, not only to have a man of your stature at the head of the IOC, but also to have such a grand patron, who recognizes the essential role of the international federations. We are mindful that your successor may not necessarily have the same point of view. We will have to work diligently in order to achieve the same level of recognition and support that we have received from you during your 21 years of Presidency.

The loyalty and faithfulness that you have shown to us, as to many others in the Olympic Movement, are certainly among the most important humane qualities, but also the most rare. We would like to pay them homage by placing them in the fifth ring that characterizes the *Homo Olympicus* that you are.

Mr President, you have often said that Olympism is sport, culture and ecology. Knowing your attachment to culture, we thought that nothing better than a work of art could express the gratitude of the

Summer and Winter Olympic International Federations, united together, and could best pay tribute to your action.

What we present to you today is a sculpture in glass by one of Venice's greatest contemporary masters – an artist of international acclaim and recognition – Pino Signoretto. This sculpture represents the torso of an athlete, recalling the Greek origins of the Olympic Games, while also suggesting the modern athletic form of today's heroes. We offer it to you in the name of the 28 Summer and seven Winter Olympic Federations as a profound testimony to our gratitude, with one wish (I dare not say condition). This is a presentation to you personally, Mr President, because of your personal commitment during these 21 years. This is not another object for the Olympic Museum. It is both an ancient and modern symbol that we would like for you to take with you to your home in Barcelona, where you will be able to look at it as often as possible, in order to remind you of what we have done together - you the President of the IOC, we the International Federations - to make the Olympic Games and Olympism what they are today, in the year 2001.

*President, Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF); IOC Executive Board member.

SPEECH BY GIAN-FRANCO KASPER*

Mr President,
During the last days, weeks or even months your great and unique merits for the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games have been acclaimed by innumerable speakers with eloquent and moving words.

The group of the International Olympic Winter Sports Federations, in whose

name I have the privilege to speak, is a small and modest group in its appearance, but with few words would nevertheless like to express its most sincere gratitude and recognition for all of the outstanding achievements that you have rendered in the last 21 years for the Olympic Movement, Sport, and most especially for the Winter Sports.

As a young official of the International Ski Federation, I had the privilege of being present at the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow when you, Mr President, were elected as the new leader of the International Olympic Committee.

Like many others I hoped and also expected that the newly-elected

Tribute

President of the IOC would undertake several much needed changes and would modernize not only the leadership of the IOC but also the collaboration and cooperation with the International Sports Federations.

Those were the hopes I had back in 1980. These hopes have been more than fulfilled and it has been a tremendous and positive experience to witness the passion, initiative and innovation which you brought not only to the structure of the IOC, but also to the philosophy of the Olympic Movement. Thus the Olympic Ideal which has adapted to the needs of our modern society has become, thanks to you, Mr President, one of the most important worldwide movements.

Back in 1993, in one of your speeches you said: “The IOC President is like the conductor of a philharmonic orchestra whose responsibility lies in harmonizing the tune and rhythm as each member is playing his own instrument.”

I am aware that it was not easy for you to harmonize this orchestra as really each and every one of us was playing his own and very unique instrument.

We all remember the difficult situation facing the IOC after the boycotts of the years 1976 to 1984 and we remember the modest financial means the IOC had before your election. If we compare it with today’s position of the IOC and Olympic Movement within the world’s modern society, we can only admire what you have done with vision, unlimited ideas, diplomatic skills, leadership as well as with an incredible and untiring dedication.

We, the International Olympic Winter Sports Federations, are proud to be part of today’s Olympic Movement, which in my opinion, is a leading pillar, if not the most important, of modern society.

Thanks to your diplomatic skills. today the three pillars of modern



Testimonies in tribute to President Samaranch, presented by IOC staff members, (from l. to r.) Sarah Ordoyno, Marie-Hélène Roukhadzé, Dominique Piscitelli, and Stéphane Kanah.

sports, the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees and the International Federations are really united under one umbrella, which itself is a significant milestone in the history and the development of sports, respectively a glowing example and a symbol for our youth in the new millennium.

The International Olympic Winter Sports Federations have many reasons to be grateful to you, it would go too far to mention in detail all the goals which have been achieved in our favour during the last 20 years.

We have more than profited from the change of the amateur status and the division of the Olympic Winter and Summer Games to different years. The financial strength of the IOC has also been to the benefit of our International Olympic Winter Sports Federations, mainly for the so-called smaller Federations and the success of the Olympic Winter Games during your Presidency has without any doubt been the best possible worldwide promotion and showcase for our individual sports. As you said in 1997, “*cooperation and unity to sport is one of the corner-*

stones of modern life and constitutes a challenge that has to be met in the future”.

You have been an inspiration to us all. Your wise advice and positive encouragement has been of great support with our own work in the International Federations.

For this and for everything that you, Mr President, have achieved in the last two decades, I would like to express to you in the name of the Association of the Olympic International Winter Sports Federations, our most sincere thanks and I sincerely hope that we will be honoured with your presence in the coming years at major events such as the biathlon, bobsleigh, luge, curling, ice hockey, ice skating and skiing.

Mr President, we will certainly never forget you and together with the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, we hope that we have found the right small token which you will also remember us by.

*President, Association of International Olympic Winter Sports Federations (AIOWF); IOC member.