

**THE OLYMPIC
CENTURY: THE
OFFICIAL HISTORY
OF THE MODERN
OLYMPIC
MOVEMENT**

**24 Volumes (Los
Angeles: World
Sport Research &
Publications, Inc.,
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**reviewed by
Robert K. Barney**

On a sunny afternoon in late May 1978, in the confines of the old Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, a movie crew was busy filming scenes for an American-inspired drama depicting the story of modern Olympic history's first-ever American Olympic team's participation in the Games of the 1st Olympiad, Athens 1896. The finished result was to be a five-part mini-series (The First Olympics – Athens 1896) for airing on NBC during the lead-up to the Moscow Games (the America Olympic team, of course, withdrew from the Moscow Games and the film was cancelled - but four years post-Moscow, the film was finally finished). On that May afternoon in 1978, a group of three men, visiting the stadium as tourists, approached the figure who seemed to be in charge of the filming enterprise, an American screenwriter and film director, Gary ALLISON, born in Washington D.C., educated in a number of American settings and, as well, in Japan, Hong Kong, and France. One of the three "tourists" was a diminutive gentleman. "What are you filming," he politely asked ALLISON. ALLISON described the project. "Where did you get your material for putting the story together?" asked the curious tourist. "Largely from the families of the Olympians who were here in this very stadium almost a hundred years ago," responded ALLISON.¹ At that point the curious tourist introduced himself. "My name is Juan Antonio Samaranch" he said, "and I am a member of the International Olympic Committee meeting here in Athens. This

project interests me very much.² Can you tell me more, say over lunch tomorrow?" "I can" said ALLISON. And thus, *1st Century Project*, the most ambitious, carefully orchestrated, intricately organized, and arguably the most lavishly produced Olympic publication initiative in the entire 100 year history of the Modern Olympic Movement was born. In time, the initiative came to be called *The Olympic Century Series*, a project which Gary ALLISON'S aging mother once told him, he had been rehearsing for all his life.

Much of SAMARANCH'S initial interest and eventual motivation for lending the IOC'S moral and practical support for the development of The Series concerned the possibilities it suggested for Olympic education, a long time pet project of the IOC stymied for decades due, in part, to a lack of imaginative project initiatives. As His Excellency stated in his "Foreword" composed for Volume 1 of The Series, when the IOC'S venerable founder and longtime president, the Baron Pierre de COUBERTIN, retired in 1925 he lamented the fact that even though the Modern Olympic Movement had achieved two of his fondest hopes (create and substantiate the Games on a quadrennial cycle, and form sports federations and national Olympic committees worldwide), he and his original founder colleagues had failed to fulfill an even more fundamental vision - a worldwide "educational outreach program in service to the humanities... to regularly and continually teach the values of Olympism. SAMARANCH'S concluding "Foreword" thoughts sum up the value he perceived The Series had for the realization of Coubertin's stymied vision, that is, "*The Olympic Century: The Official History of the Modern Olympic Movement makes it possible for Olympic studies to be taught anywhere in the world... the perfect starting point for all teachers, students, writers, and individuals who seek to learn the valued human lessons that the Olympics inspire.*"³

If indeed those SAMARANCH thoughts were a starting point, then the conundrum of how to

* This review was also published in *Olympika. The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 12(2003), pp. 51-62.

1 Much of the primary source material for ALLISON'S portrait of the 1896 American Olympians came for the accumulated effects of the Thomas CURTIS family. CURTIS won the 100 meter hurdles event in history's first Modern Olympic Games. Further, in his youth, while living in Washington, D.C., ALLISON remembers having met two 1896 American Olympians - Robert GARRETT, winner of the discus, shot-put, and second in the high-jump and long-jump, and Welles HOYT, winner of the pole-vault.

2 In 1978 SAMARANCH, according to some, already had designs on the IOC presidency following the end of Lord KILLANIN'S term in 1980. In 1978, too, he might also have been aware that the gurus of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games Organizing Committee felt confident that an American television rights contract would produce well over \$200 million. Neither could he have been oblivious to the fact that the percentage of such a rights fee that finally ended up in the IOC treasury could do much to advance the cause of Olympic initiatives long frustrated for lack of resources to execute them. *The Olympic Century Series* and financial support of it by the IOC owes much to television rights fees income.

3 See SAMARANCH, Juan Antonio, "Foreword," in: *The Ancient Olympiads & Bridges to the Modern Era* (The Olympic Century Series; vol. 1), p. 5.

translate them into realizable goals posed a great challenge. In meeting the challenge, four major goals for the project eventually materialized: (1) to provide schools and public libraries with an accurate, comprehensive, and relatively inexpensive "continuity book series;" (2) to produce a product that might serve as a cornerstone for an internet-based Olympic Studies Program serving secondary schools, high schools, colleges and universities, and individuals who might want to pursue a self taught course; (3) to endow the entire Series with humanities-oriented educational components and modules that would fulfill most "standards-based, core curricula" in use around the world; (4) to design the mechanical specifications of the Series and Olympic Study Programs in such a cost-effective way as to invite numerous translations, which in turn would allow the entire world to eventually and theoretically be reading the same page and viewing the same images; and finally (5) to create a way in which the Series might be "refreshed" at the conclusion of each Olympiad by the vision of further volumes, an extension of history, if you will.

The awesome ramifications of these lofty goals prompted some serious soul searching and attempts to gather thoughts and advice from the far corner of the globe. Throughout an almost twenty year period the project laboured on, aided immeasurably by discussions with library personnel, teachers, school administrators, and ministry of education officials around the world. From this kind of articulation the project took shape. Many were all too aware of the fact that Olympic books on library shelves were often contaminated with contradictory inaccuracies, largely because the authors concerned were limited to primary and secondary source documentation they could find only in the area where they lived and worked. This limitation dictated a coordinated, worldwide research mission, translating into a "start at the beginning approach." The wondrous application of internet search engines to get at obscure material was important. But even more so, were the labours of handpicked "research agents" in countries across the globe. Their task was to explore local libraries, archives, museums, indeed seek out former Olympians or their surviving family members in a quest for primary material. Their dedication to the success of the project, claims

Allison, was absolutely critical. Many of them, remembers ALLISON, became close family members of the production effort, to the point where during the almost two decade period of research activity many of them passed through life's joyous milestones - graduations, engagements, marriages, first child birth, and, sadly, far less joyous occasions, death and funeral.

The original thought had been that the grand project could be accomplished in a period of eight to ten years time. That proved to be a pipedream. Almost two decades after the project's commencement, following countless meetings, research sojourns across the world, editing, re-editing, and production, the first 6 editions of a planned 24 volume-set appeared. There was consternation. The result was a disappointment to the production directors. The "push" for the first six volumes to appear coincident with the celebration of Atlanta's Centennial Games had created too many errors. All six volumes, each treating a single Olympiad during which both a summer and an Olympic winter festival had been organized, were recalled.⁴ "We have to do better" was the judgment. And "do better," the production impresarios certainly did. By 2000, shortly before the celebration of the Sydney Games, the 23 volumes of The Series had been published. Only Volume 2 on Athens 1896 remained unpublished (it was scheduled to appear in February 2004).

Never before had so many contributed to an Olympic publication effort; never had so much money been spent, some \$11.5 million.⁵ Given that astounding amount one might surmise that the cost to the consumer would be prohibitive. But such is not the case. The cost of the 24 volume-set is \$599 U.S., which works out to be a few cents less than \$25.00 U.S. per volume. Considering the magnitude of the material, credible historical reporting, superior illustrations, paper quality, print type, and binding, etc. the finished product must rank as one of the publishing world's greatest all-time bargains. Substantial psychic and "door opening" support for The Series came from those who will most certainly benefit the most from what it will do for the public relations and an awareness of the Modern Olympic Movement. The original plan was for The Series to be published in England, France, or Switzerland. The final resting place for

⁴ The six volumes "recalled" were the Games of Olympiads VIII (Paris/Chamonix, 1924), XI (Berlin/Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1936), XVIII (Tokyo/Innsbruck, 1964), XIX (Mexico city/Grenoble, 1968), XX (Munich/Sapporo, 1972), and XXIII (Los Angeles/Sarajevo, 1984).

⁵ The original estimate attached to the initiative was \$3.5 million. With the addition of the worldwide research component, the figure rose to \$5 million. By the time the first six volumes had been retooled and the Series printed in December 1999, and despite penny-pinching and often painful budget controls, a total of 21 years and \$11.5 million dollars had been exhausted.

The Series' publishing headquarters, however, became Los Angeles, partly because ALLISON'S chief residence is there, partly because of the English language consequence, and partly because of the prospective involvement of the USOC. Of course, any initiative of Olympic nature, commercial or otherwise, launched in the United States whereby the use of Olympic marks is envisioned (the Olympic rings are a noticeable feature of each volume), is subject to ratification by the USOC, under the rights granted by the *United States Amateur Sports Act* of 1978.⁶ Though articulation with the IOC in distant Switzerland for needed aid and succor on the project was generally readily forthcoming, negotiations with the Olympic medals-and-wealth-intent USOC were at times laborious and disorienting. Nevertheless, the project finally reached fruition. In the end, neither the IOC nor the USOC contributed a dime to the final cost of the project. What each organization did do, was to endorse the project and exert powerful influence in such a way as to open the doors to private, foundation, and corporate finance. From such sources came most of the \$11.5 million.

In my opinion, this series is unique! If that is true, what are the qualities that make it so? First and foremost, I point to the authors entrusted with writing the story. For their literary expertise and the execution of their research, I have great admiration. How eight different writers can labour independently of each other and produce a cohesive, uniformly-expressed, almost seamless epic, volume after volume, is cause for wonderment. And yet, each volume was designed to "stand alone" on its own merits, without dependency on its predecessor or successor in The Series. In general, the past record of multiple authors, each of them with their own style, language, and inspiration, has been one fraught with notorious shortcomings in terms of harmonious, agreeable, and consistent expression. Such is certainly not the case in The Series. The style of delivery is consistently lively, compelling, indeed, at times inspirational; literary expression routinely captures both the "time" and "mood" of each of the Games. If the old learning axiom is true, "*that good reading breeds good writing*" then the literary quality of The Series should inspire much in the way of improved writing from its readers in educational settings. Finally, there is a pronounced balance reflected in The Series. The historically noteworthy feats of

Olympians from all parts of the world receive their due, whether from large countries or small, rich or poor, "East" or "West," and those old and storied in Olympic tradition or of "late comer" status. Adding to the balance of the Series is the fact that every sport discipline and its Olympian heroes, sooner or later, receive deserved attention.

There have been eight authors thus far. New volumes to appear in the future may add to this complement, for instance, the forthcoming Volume 2 *the Games of Olympiad I-Athens 1896*, scheduled for release in February 2004, was written by Gary ALLISON himself, together with the Senior Consultant of the entire Series, Dietrich QUANZ, the distinguished German scholar from the German Sport University Cologne). In this epic Series, the authors (together with the Volumes and the Olympiads they tackled) are: Carl POSEY: #3 -- 1900-Paris, #4 - 1904-St. Louis, #13 -- 1952-Helsinki / Cortina, #14 -- 1956-Melbourne / Squaw Valley, # 16 -- 1964-Tokyo / 1968-Grenoble, and # 24 -- 1996-Atlanta / 1998-Nagano; James LYNCH: #1 -- The Ancient Games; George DANIELS: #6 -- 1912-Stockholm, #12 -- 1948-London / 1952 - Oslo, #17 -- 1968-Mexico / 1972-Sapporo, and #18 -- 1972-Munich / 1976-Innsbruck; Ellen GALFORD: #10 -- 1932-Los Angeles / 1936-Garmisch-Partenkirchen, #21 -- 1984-Los Angeles / 1988-Calgary, and #22 -- 1988-Seoul / 1992- Albertville; George CONSTABLE: #5 -- 1908-London, #11 -- 1936-Berlin / 1948-St. Moritz, # 19 -- 1976-Montreal / 1980-Lake Placid, and #23 -- 1992-Barcelona / 1994-Lillehammer; Ellen PHILLIPS: #7 -- 1920-Antwerp / 1924-Chamonix, #8 -- 1924-Paris / 1932-Squaw Valley, and #15 -- 1960 Rome / 1964-Innsbruck; Roberta CONLON: #20 -- 1980-Moscow / 1984-Sarajevo; and, finally, George RUSSELL: #9 -- 1928-Amsterdam / 1932-Lake Placid. The work of the authors was ably assisted by Debra LEMONDS, chief photo editor of The Series. Finally, the entire set was produced under the critical and detailed supervision of Christian KINNEY. The names noted above (with the exception of ALLISON and QUANZ) were all former writers/editors for *Time-Life*.

It was both an unfortunate and fortunate set of circumstances that resulted in the demise of the celebrated Time-Life Books series in the late 1980s-unfortunate for Time-Life Books, whose distinguished volumes on a variety of historical/cultural subjects have decorated the coffee tables

⁶ In fact, though little known, a United States Congressional Act ratified on September 20, 1950 gave exclusive jurisdiction over the use of Olympic symbols to the USOC (at the time, USOA-United States Olympic Association). See BARNEY, Robert K. / WENN, Stephen R. / MARTYN, Scott G., *Selling the Five Rings: The International Olympic Committee and the Rise of Olympic Commercialism*, Salt Lake City 2002, pp. 47-48.

and bookshelves of American homes for decades, but fortunate for the huge challenge of writing the Olympic Century Series. To Gary ALLISON'S team came some of the most experienced, energetic, and accomplished writers on the literary scene in the 1970s and 1980s. Several of them had been senior editors at *Time-Life* - James LYNCH, Carl POSEY, George CONSTABLE, Ellen PHILLIPS, George RUSSELL, and Ellen GALFORD. LYNCH, author of the Ancient Games volume, directed the Time-Life Books epic: Ancient Man Series. Roberta Conlon, the author of the Moscow/Sarajevo volume spent several years in Moscow, is fluent with Russian sources, and, in fact, was herself a marathon runner. Added to this team of superb writers was the important skill and experience of Christopher M. REGISTER, Time-Life international award-winning designer who crafted the unusually beautiful "look" of the entire Series.

The research-gathering mission took no shortcuts, and, in fact, was worldwide. A team of individuals, including the authors of each of the planned volumes, visited the individual host cities, breathed their historical and cultural atmospheres, articulated with the on-site "research agents," and gathered the fruits of research in local libraries and archives. But, most critical of all was the importance of personal reminiscences, cherished photographs, and Olympic memorabilia heirlooms gathered from scores of former Olympians and their families. Each "traveling group" included a team of three experts knowledgeable in the ways of competition on an Olympic level. As a result, the dramatic technical, medical, and psychological challenges imposed, for instance, by downhill ski courses, bob-sled runs, exhausting decathlon competitions, even sickness, injury, and psychological duress, factored into the spellbinding accounts of an athlete's quest for an Olympic medal, gold or otherwise.

Beyond superb writing, let's consider the scope of the series. Starting with an introductory volume (Volume 1 - *The Ancient Olympiad & Bridges to the Modern Era*) to the latest volume produced (Atlanta / Nagano), each book details the Olympic events unfolding during a particular Olympiad, the four year quadrennial that features both a summer and a winter festival. Embedded in this type of material are the human triumphs and tragedies that fold into Olympic preparation and competition. In no other works of which I am familiar are these types of dramas told better. One key to this, of course, is the quality of the writing. The Series is written in English, the

increasingly universal language of world affairs, including scholarship. Translation of The Series into other languages is an intended goal for the future and, as ALLISON states, "*In our lifetime, this will be accomplished.*" From its inception, the layout design of the series was carefully calibrated by Christopher REGISTER, to lift the English text and insert the language translation, so that in the future, as ALLISON says, "*everyone the world over will be reading from the same page.*" The design matrix includes a reversal of page flow, as would be required for a Chinese, Japanese, or Arabic edition; but even in these instances the page numbers will stay the same. A new volume will be added to "refresh" The Series at the beginning of each future Olympiad (for example, Volume 25, chronicling the XXVII Olympiad, Sydney 2000 and Salt Lake City 2002, will appear in August 2004).

Scads of "think tank" exercises went into the grand design of the project. For instance, take the double page layout inside both the front and back covers (front for the Summer Games, back for the Winter Games). Here, one finds maps of "the Olympic world" as it existed at the time of the Games treated by a particular volume. The host city site is represented in exact geographical position by a golden Olympic flame; the countries participating in the Games are shaded in a rich colour, maroon for the Summer Games, blue for the Winter Festivals. Those countries that did not participate are shaded in white. Countries that boycotted various Games are also delineated. Further, each of the participating countries is listed beneath the two-page spread of this bit of striking "Olympic geography." Through this scheme, one can make one's way from volume to volume and plot the growth and expansion of the Olympic Movement worldwide in the blink of an eye.

In general, each of the volumes first present the Summer Games of an Olympiad, succeeded by treatment of Olympic matters and issues away from the stadium (crisis, problems, controversial issues, etc.) and, finally, treatment of the Winter Games for that Olympiad (with the obvious modification for those volumes dealing with Olympiads occurring before the arrival of the Winter Games in 1924). The accompanying pictorial material can only be described as phenomenal. Much of the material has never been seen in published context. The largest percentage of this impressive photographic dimension was not generated from the IOC archives in Lausanne (in fact, the IOC still-photo archives benefited handsomely from the

photographic material presented in The Series). Nor did much come from the archives of National Olympic Committees around the world, most of which proved disappointing in the global search for material.⁷ No, the greater amount of "new finds" came from the scrapbooks, photograph albums, and nostalgic Olympic memorabilia mementos of former Olympians, in fact, as ALLISON himself asserts, "*the greatest custodians of the record of the Modern Olympic Movement have been the Olympians themselves.*"

An impressive summary of Olympic history can be found in each volume's several appendices. Consider one volume as an example model (XXVI Olympiad –Atlanta 1996, Nagano 1998). First, an appendix called "*Calendar of the XXVI Olympiad*" (2 pages). There, one will find a listing of all the major events that occurred during the XXVI Olympiad – IOC Executive Board Meetings, IOC Sessions, regional Games, Paralympic Games, and so on. Second, an appendix offering a complete listing of the "*Atlanta 1996 Program of Events*" (preliminary, semi-final, final, etc.), the day, time, and venue (10 pages). Third, an appendix called "*Atlanta 1996: 23rd Olympic Summer Games*" (20 pages), in effect, the Olympic results – each discipline, each event, places 1-6, performance marks (if applicable). An ingenious colour and symbol scheme allows the reader to identify gold, silver, and bronze medallists in an instant, as well as performances that produced world or Olympic records. A national medal count by nation concludes this appendix. Fifth, an appendix that presents "*Nagano 1998 Program of Events*" (2 pages), day, time, and venue. Sixth, an appendix that records "*Nagano 1998: 18th Olympic Winter Games*" (5 pages) identifying the champion Olympians and their "first six" colleagues, along with performance marks. Seventh, an appendix called "*Record of the XXVI Olympiad (July 19, 1996 to September 15, 2000)*" in which IOC administration, "*Olympic Awards*" and IOC publication matters are presented (2 pages). There, one will find a listing of IOC Executive Board membership, new IOC members, departures of old members, winners of the Olympic Cup and the Olympic Order, and the publication record of the *Olympic Charter and the Olympic Review* during that Olympiad. Finally, an appendix offering acknowledgements, photo credits, and a helpful bibliography of sources consulted, followed by a comprehensive five-page index, conclude the volume, in all, a group

of appendices totaling some 45 pages, each one a supreme reference for the researcher.

The exemplary graphic scheme of The Series is continued in the interior text itself. There are two consistent features that deserve attention. First, in the Summer Games section of each volume one can view an exact city and surrounding area plot plan depicting "*Where The Games Were Played,*" the map location of each venue for each sport. In the Winter Games section this feature is repeated, but in topographical perspective to accommodate the downhill ski events. Here, I register a criticism. Unlike the Summer Games maps, which are consistently posed in our normal viewing of a map (with one perplexing exception—St. Louis 1904), that is, up=North, down=South, right=East, left=West), all of the Winter Games map sites but two (Oslo 1952 and Nagano 1998) pose viewing problems. When one views the 1988 Calgary Winter Games "Olympic map," for instance, Canmore, a town west of Calgary near the foot of the mountains where the downhill ski events occurred, appears to be east of the city. We know, of course, there are no mountains in the Province of Alberta east of Calgary, only prairies. In some cases (but not all) the editors chose to feature terrain maps with North-South compass points inserted that indicate North oftentimes at the bottom of the figure, at other times to the left, still others, to the right. This is confusing, indeed frustrating; site interpretation often becomes one derived from an upside-down perspective. Finally, graphic schema found in the textual treatment entitled "*The Games At A Glance*" a grid-table of each of the events and its calendar occasion, together with informative sidebars, offer helpful and quick reference tools.

An encyclopedic work of this nature invariably invites comparison to other worthy initiatives of the same general ilk. Though there are scores of "*The History of the Olympic Games at a Glance*" genre, most of which suffer greatly from a lack of both thorough and independent primary research, compromising principles of objectivity, and corner-cutting production decisions, there are at least three works that fall well beyond the criticisms stated above. One of these is reflected in the longtime work of David Wallechinsky. His admirable continuing series of volumes on each Olympic festival as it has unfolded since his first effort in 1984,⁸ provides a wealth of statistical information, but his organization format presents problems to

⁷ According to ALLISON, the most notable exceptions to the general lack of research records held by the world's NOCs are the archives of the Swedish, English, Italian, and Dutch NOCs.

⁸ WALLECHINSKY, David, *The Complete Book of the Olympic Games*, London 1984.

examiners of information when compared to the way similar data is expressed in The Series. Then, too, though WALLECHINSKY presents some textual treatment of athletes and events, it is miniscule and is engulfed by the mass of statistics presented. A few selected photographs accompany WALLECHINSKY'S volumes, but most of them have been seen heretofore in "genre volumes" published earlier.

A second effort of first rank was produced by the now deceased, legendary Austrian Olympic journalist, Erich KAMPER, and his research colleague, Bill MALLON, an American orthopedic surgeon and co-founder of the *International Society of Olympic Historians*. In their 1992 *The Golden Book of the Olympic Games*,⁹ an organizational model was employed much like that pursued by WALLECHINSKY.

Then there are the Bill MALLON-inspired-and-produced Olympic books, a series designed to treat in entirety the Games of each Olympiad, particularly from the point of view of "Results for All Competitors in All Events, with Commentary." Mallon's original intent was to execute volumes examining the earliest Games, those occurring between 1896 and 1920, for which research information is far more limited than is available for those Olympic festivals that occurred later. Sales and public interest results from MALLON'S volumes treating the 1896, 1900, 1904, 1906 (he argues that the so-called Intercalary Games were legitimate Olympic Games), 1908, 1912, and 1920 have prompted both the publishers (McFarland & Company, Jefferson, North Carolina) and MALLON himself to consider "pressing on," at least towards producing volumes treating the various Olympic festivals staged from 1924 to and including the 1936 Games in Berlin and Garmisch-Partenkirchen. This series of works¹⁰ has much to commend

them. There are exhaustive statistics, entertaining descriptions, impressive background history, but, as with WALLECHINSKY, as well as with the KAMPER/MALLON volume, little attempt at analysis. This is a serious shortcoming, one that The Series does not shy from, whether it puts the Modern Olympic Movement in a positive light, or one decidedly different. Then too, the MALLON series contains no photographic material and, perturbing to many, the cumulative cost to the consumer for the six volumes thus far produced is roughly equal to the entire cost of the 24 volume Series. The Olympic Century Series, benefiting from the sum of those attributes mentioned previously, extends far beyond each of the three notable examples described above.

Finally, in the authoritative or serious scholarly vein, some might equate The Olympic Century Series to the IOC-published centennial three volume set, *The International Olympic Committee – One Hundred Years: The Idea – The Presidents – The Achievements*.¹¹ But, the IOC set is almost completely void of material on the Olympic Games themselves, the pageantry, the athletic feats, the human interest stories. Then too, of course, the material avoids the embarrassing or less than noteworthy events of the "Olympic century" and, further, are written by noted academics whose pedantic style will not be particularly attractive to the general reader. Quite frankly, as one might expect, the IOC volumes lack the critical objectivity flavor that is sharply reflected in *The Olympic Century Series*.

A strong argument can be made that *The Olympic Century Series* should document the shelves of educational institution libraries the world over. Choice reviewer,¹² Steven RIESS, asserts that The Series is aimed at the "general reader," but its appeal extends far beyond, in fact, to younger generation readers, to avocationist

⁹ KAMPER, Erich / MALLON, Bill, *The Golden Book of the Olympic Games*, Milan 1992.

¹⁰ For the 1896 Games see MALLON and Ture WIDLUND (Jefferson, North Carolina 1998); 1900 Games, MALLON, (1998); 1904 Games, MALLON (1999); 1906 Games, MALLON (1999); 1908 Games, MALLON and Ian BUCHANAN (2000); 1912 Games, MALLON and Ture WIDLUND (2002); and 1920 Games, MALLON and Anthony BIJKERK (2002).

¹¹ For a complete reference to the IOC's three volume centennial set, see BOULOGNE, Y.-P. "The Presidencies of Demetrius Vikelas (1894-1896) and Pierre de Coubertin (1896-1925)" and LENNARTZ, K. (The presidency of Henri de Baillet Latour (1925-1942)", in: IOC (ed.), 1894 - 1994. *The International Olympic Committee - One Hundred Years. The Idea – The Presidents – The Achievements*, vol. 1, Lausanne 1994; LENNARTZ, K. "The presidency of Sigfrid Edström (1942-1952" and SCHANTZ, Otto, "The presidency of Avery Brundage (1952-1972)", in: IOC (ed.), 1894 - 1994. *The International Olympic Committee - One Hundred Years. The Idea – The Presidents – The Achievements*, vol. 2, Lausanne 1995; and LANDRY, F. / YERLÈS, M., "The Presidencies of Lord Killanin (1972-1980) and Juan Antonio Samaranch (1981-)", in: IOC (ed.), 1894 - 1994. *The International Olympic Committee - One Hundred Years. The Idea – The Presidents – The Achievements*, vol 3, Lausanne 1996.

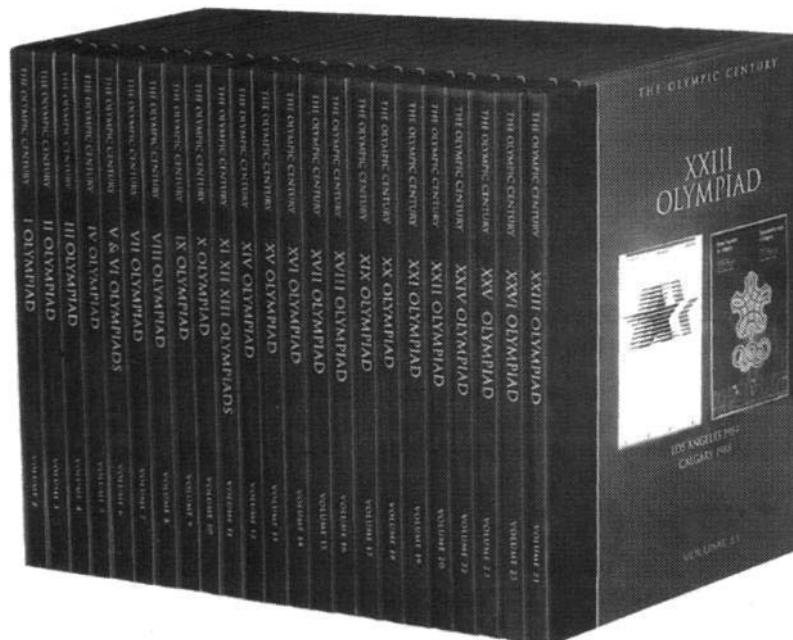
¹² See RIESS, S.A., "Review of the Olympic Century," Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries, June 2000, www.choicemag.org. The Choice distinction is a distinctive award for The Series. For any single year, some 25,000 titles of new books are surveyed for recommendation to institutional and public libraries across America by Choice. Of the original titles surveyed, some 6,000 emerge for semi-final adjudication for Choice award designation. Of the 6,000, only 600 finally achieve the award distinction.

Olympic fans and researchers, as well as to serious academic Olympic scholars. The Series was lately subjected to the evaluation criteria of the *Los Angeles Unified School District* (LAUSD), where it received the highest category distinction - "Priority 1." The LAUSD evaluates all publications that seek to enter public and private elementary and secondary schools throughout the USA. An evaluation similar to that of the LAUSD is under review by the *New York Unified School District*.

I would like to conclude with some thoughts about the chief thrust of The Series - Olympic education, a stated dimension of which professes to *"reinforce the Olympic ideal as a way to encourage the raising of individual student aspirations, while bolstering dedication to purpose, ethics, responsibility, inclusion, and cultural respect"*¹³ These are indeed noble goals, but they are hardly new. Olympic ideals, most often referred to as "Olympism," are exactly similar in principle to those that have been taught in family, church, and education environments long before anything known as Olympic Games ever came about. Thus, I believe that the true value of *The Olympic Century Series* lies not in "preaching values," but rather in stimulating and motivating the educative process by utilizing the demonstrated world-wide exposure and appeal of the Olympic Games as a vehicle for arousing better reading, better writing, better analysis, better study habits; nothing more, simply the presentation of stimulating material that

engenders the hoped-for response in the student that is part and parcel of the entire genre of heroic literature under girding scores of disciplinary studies. To me, *The Olympic Century Series* offers a better prospectus for this than any of the lofty proclamations, labyrinthine-like schemes, or haphazard implementations of so-called "Olympic education" that I have thus far encountered in the "Olympic world."

Finally, I close with a personal footnote. I have read every word of each volume. It took me almost two years. I read each volume while stepping away on a stairmaster, one dimension of an almost daily fitness program to combat the ever-advancing weight-gain and activity-diminishing character of a senior citizen. By the end of The Series, I had climbed some 75,000 flights of stairs, burned over 250,000 calories, shed almost a thousand pounds of water, and lost 30 pounds in body weight and four inches of midsection flesh. I owe it all to The Series, which distracted my agony, maintained my interest, and motivated me onward in my quest for more Olympic knowledge. Like the resolute evergreen tree in my back yard that never loses its foliage, indeed endures all seasons, *The Olympic Century Series*, too, embodies its own indestructible qualities. And, like that evergreen tree, it, too, signals great promise for "staying the course."



¹³ Cited from "Units of Study Outline for the Companion Core Curriculum Guides," (p. 2) published by the 1st Century Project planners. Indeed, the "Study Guide," designed to provide Olympic studies in four different settings, Middle Schools, High Schools, post-secondary institutions, and self study for individuals and families, offers theme taught semesters focusing on material related to history, English and literature, mathematics, social sciences/geography, art and graphics, and physical education.