

TRIBUTE TO BILL MALLON

(WITH AN APOLOGY)

In 1984, Bill Mallon mentioned in one of his letters to me: that he was “compiling a group of Olympic Experts” and asked if I was interested in joining the group. My answer was, of course, positive because I had been involved in Olympic historical research since 1960. In 1988, Bill reported to me that the “Society of Olympic Historians” would not get off the ground yet. In October 1991 I finally received his invitation for a meeting of Olympic historians and researchers in, Davos, Switzerland. This meeting place was later changed into London, England and set for December 5th, 1991. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this founders meeting.

This short summary shows that 12 years ago Bill was the driving force behind the founding of the International Society of Olympic Historians. He contacted the most likely persons for (t)his Society and sent the invitation to most of the founding members.

Reading through my files, I noted that in the same period he also wrote several Olympic history books and even compiled an Olympic bibliography; he did a lot of research on the early Olympic Games; he did his residency as a medical doctor and further specialized in orthopedic surgery. How a man can do all these things within a period of 24 hours in a day and seven days in a week, and then still have time for a family life? That is still a mystery to me.

In the Netherlands we have a name for such a man. We call him a “centipede.” Americans call him a “workhorse”. Whatever we call him, Bill truly must work very, very hard!

Anyway, with Stan Greenberg, David Wallechinsky, Peter Matthews, Ian Buchanan, Ture Widlund, Ove Karlsson and Bill, himself, in attendance, the International Society of Olympic Historians was founded on December 5, 1991. Ian Buchanan was elected its first President and Bill Mallon its first Secretary-General and editor of the Journal.

Largely through his efforts, the Society has grown by leaps and bounds and currently counts over two hundred members and patron members. As an editor, he produced 13 ISOH Journals and invented the name of the Journal: *Citius, Altius, Fortius*.

Just think of all the work that had to be done to get one of those journals on its way to the members! Sure, he sometimes received assistance from a typist, but most of the menial tasks, like packing and handling, had to be done by himself.

Bill called himself a pioneer and pioneers do not shirk menial tasks. That is an American streak, too! Nevertheless, I think that everyone of us realize that, mostly through his efforts, (albeit others played an important role, too!) the International Society of Olympic Historians stands where it is today. A solid and prosperous organization, with a Journal of its own that gives us, members, much interesting “stuff” to read every four months. For all this work, we owe Bill Mallon a “lot” of thanks!

I already mentioned my files. When I finished the statistics for the “Golden Book of the Dutch Olympians” early in 1996, I went through my files in order to pay tribute to all people, that had been instrumental in aiding me in my search for the personal data from the Dutch Olympians. But unfortunately I forgot to look into my international files. Therefore I still owe Bill Mallon an apology, because I completely forgot to mention his name among the “chosen” ones. Bill aided me many times with data on Dutch people, that emigrated to the U.S.A. after their Olympic participation. It must have been at least a score of them and I am extremely sorry not to have mentioned Bill in my acknowledgments. Therefore let me say it right here: “Thank you, Bill Mallon!” from all of us, and from me in particular.

Tony Bijkerk