

# TSUYOSHI ROBERT "BOB" MIYAKAWA

By Wolf Lyberg

## In Memoriam

**A** friendship of almost fifty years suddenly ended suddenly last month, when a fax from Tokyo announced that Tsuyoshi "Bob" Miyakawa had passed away on Sunday, August 6th.

We, Bob and I, met for the first time in 1952 or 1953, when he, a young promising sportswriter, followed the Swedish soccer team, and won the hearts of everybody - not only because he spoke brilliant English, but also because of his traditional Japanese courtesy - and a knowledge of sport which surprised many of us, as Japan had been so isolated for many years from international sport participation.

This young writer advanced very rapidly to the position of head of the famous Kyodo News Sportdesk.

He travelled over all the world, learned what sportswriters wished and needed, and when he had to take over the job as Chief of Press, just before the Sapporo Olympic Winter Games, in 1972, he made it into an impressive task, which he performed well, and was liked by every journalist.

The International Olympic Committee quickly noticed his enormous possibilities and thus Bob became a member of the IOC Press Commission in 1975. He had to resign from this commission in 1992, because of problems with his lungs.

His doctors then forbid him to fly. . . and he had to carry oxygen bottles with him for most of the time.

I don't exaggerate, when I state here and now that Bob Miyakawa was a central figure in that IOC Press Commission and that the modern journalists following the IOC today have a lot to thank him for when it comes to covering the Olympics. For his work in the IOC Press Commission the IOC awarded him the Olympic Order.

For the Japanese members of the IOC, and especially for the earlier ones, like Prince Takeda, he was an invaluable companion and advisor. The other IOC member from Japan, Masaji Kiyokawa, also saw what a fantastic source

of information and knowledge Bob Miyakawa was and they became close friends.

He worked intensively for the Japanese Olympic Committee - from which he was a member of the Board for many years - and started a prominent internal exchange of information. He translated many important historical books on sport from English into Japanese and in this way spread knowledge to the very sportsinterested Japanese people. For his work on the JOC, he was nominated Honorary member.

For his many friends in the ISOH - even if I am sure I was one of the few he personally knew by sight - he always was a one hundred percent certain source of information. As a journalist, and used to work with timelimits and deadlines, he always answered questions quickly and thoroughly. One of his last great works was when he made up a list with some thirty different archives on sport in Japan.

His name for many years was a "Open Sesame" for me - he was very well known and respected. Our friendship survived almost five decades, mostly through long letters and faxes. It will be empty without these - not to mention the nice evenings we had together, when we visited some old Japanese inns, during my visits to Japan.

My last contact with him was, when I faxed him a letter with my congratulations (a few days too late) for his 75th birthday (he was born in the United States of America on 27 April 1925), and he promptly answered that same day, informing me about the crisis he had survived after mistreatment in his hospital with wrong medicines. But he finished his message saying: "Do not worry. I will soon be OK again."

I am sure he then already was aware of what was to come in the near future, but the type of man he was, Bob was opposed to have other people worry about his health.

Therefore: "Rest in Peace, my very dear Friend Bob! I am sure - if I know You well - that the angels very soon will be well educated in Olympic history".