

# Obituaries

## YVES-PIERRE BOULONGNE

By Norbert Müller

The studies of the life of Pierre de Coubertin and the researchers of Olympic History in the whole world will mourn the passing of the longtime Vice-President of the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee, Professor Dr. Yves-Pierre Boulongne.

Boulongne was known and appreciated worldwide, and his main publication: *L'oeuvre pédagogique de Pierre de Coubertin* [published by Lemeac, Ottawa, Canada in 1975] was read all over and used for references. It was the socio-historical background of Coubertin, which he had discovered in particular. Coubertin as an historiographer was one of his many guiding articles.

Until the very last moment, Yves Boulongne worked and fought for spreading the humanistic values of Olympism. In particular, one must mention his contribution to the Centenary Edition of the IOC, titled: *1894-1994 The International Olympic Committee – One Hundred Years*, where he wrote about the Presidency of Pierre de Coubertin [Tome I - Lausanne 1994] and his book, published in 1998, titled: *10 Leçons sur l'Olympisme*, what may be called his spiritual testament.

Boulongne served in 1997 as co-President of the special Memorial Congress in Le Havre, which was organized by the CIPC: "Coubertin and Olympism. Questions for the Future".

He was penetrated as almost no others by Coubertin, his Normannic compatriot, whose emancipatory way of thinking he admired: Coubertin's life motto: "See far; speak frank; act firm" was for him a line of action which dominated his life in the same way.

In this way he taught his students in Africa, where he worked with his wife Clairette at his side, for twenty years in Tunisia, and later in Senegal, building at the founding of new Sports Academies and Teacher Training Colleges.

Since 1975 he was a much appreciated lecturer in Olympism at the International Olympic Academy in Olympia, and later at the University of Mainz in Germany.

In this way I learned much from him. With his 76 years of age, he followed the call for the Chaire Européenne in this University and in the summer of 1996 he refreshingly and with indefatigable devotion taught for several months.

He always was there for each and everyone of his students; and searched with an open and critical mind for the best way to serve.

The Faculty of Sport Sciences of the University of Mainz honoured Yves Pierre Boulongne with the title of Doctor honoris causa – the highest academic award – in January 2000.

Since 1997 he was also involved in the Olympic Council of the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

The ethical dimensions of Olympism gave him much to think about in the last part of his lifetime.

He worried about the spiritual future of the Olympic Movement.

I think it was a stroke of destiny, when Boulongne and I met for the first time in 1975 on a meadow-land in Dakar, where I stood with a copy of his doctorate thesis on Coubertin which I had bought in Montréal a short while earlier. From that moment we never let go of each other and stayed in contact.

His way of thinking will keep its place in our learnings: many students of Coubertin and Olympic historians in the whole wide world, with in particular his colleagues and friends in the *Comité International Pierre de Coubertin* will mourn his passing.

## **TERRENCE STEVEN GATHERCOLE AM**

**By Kevin Berry (Kevin was a team-mate of Gathercole's at the Rome Olympics).**

Swimmer, coach, sports administrator.

Born, West Wyalong, November 25, 1935

Died, Canberra May 30, 2001. Aged 65

Terry Gathercole gave a lifetime to his chosen sport, swimming.

He was an elite swimmer; a Master coach; and finally, a world renowned sporting administrator. He was President of Australian Swimming at the time of the Sydney Olympic Games.

Gathercole was born in the NSW country town of West Wyalong. He represented the West Wyalong Amateur Swimming Club throughout his whole competitive swimming career, only joining Forbes Carlisle training squads when

selected for Olympic or Commonwealth Games teams.

One of his proudest achievements was convincing the Sydney Olympic Torch Relay organisers to re-route the relay so that it would pass by the West Wyalong Olympic pool. Gathercole ended up being the torch bearer for this leg of the flame's journey.

The "boy from the bush" rose from country age group swimmer to become the leading breaststroker in this country in the 1950's. He won his first Australian title in 1954 and between then and 1960, he took out every national breaststroke title. For many years this feat was listed in the Guinness Book of Records as being the most consecutive championships won by a male competitor.

He represented Australia at the 1956 and 1960 Olympics. At the Rome Games of 1960, he won a silver medal as member of the Australian medley relay team.

He also represented at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games at Cardiff, in 1958. At Wales, he was a gold medallist in the 220 yards breaststroke and the medley relay. Gathercole established a world record for the 200 metres breaststroke in 1958. His time of 2 minutes, 36.5 seconds stood for several years.

His coaching record was almost as illustrious as his swimming career. He was an Olympic coach at Tokyo (1964), Montreal (1976) and Barcelona (1992) as well as being Commonwealth Games coach to the 1966 Jamaica team. He served on Australian teams at the World Championships held in Columbia (1975) and Perth (1991).

Gathercole produced many great champions over the years. Included amongst his charges were Olympic gold medallists Ian O'Brien (1964) and Beverley Whitfield (1972) and world champion Linley Frame. It is worth noting, these three swimmers were all breaststrokers. Gathercole believed there were only two types of swimmers: Those that swam breaststroke and those that wished they had swum breaststroke.

Known as "Coach" by most of his swimmers, Gathercole remained baby-faced for most of his life. It was recalled at a Memorial Service held

for him in Canberra, a week after his death, that he could pass as a teenager well into his 30's.

He retired from competition swimming following the Rome Games and turned his hand to coaching. The Australian Swimming Union thought so highly of him that they appointed him Head Women's coach to the Tokyo Olympic team in 1964, less than four years after becoming a professional coach.

In 1968, he accepted a position as head coach of a club team in Midland, Texas, USA. This team grew from 29 members to 320 competitive swimmers in the space of five years.

It was while in Texas that Gathercole became a fan of Country and Western music. At a Memorial Service, the song, *Pecos Promenade* by country and western artist Tanya Tucker, was played. The singer was a West Texas artist, from Midland. Another favourite of his, the *1812 Overture*, was also played. "Coach" chose the music before his death.

Terry Gathercole was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1985 and three years later was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).

Gathercole became Vice-President of Australian Swimming in 1992 and took over the Presidency in 1997. He served in that position until after the Sydney Games.

It was while at the helm of Australian Swimming that he took a very strong stand against the use of illegal drugs in sport. Olympic gold medallist, John Devitt, a life-long friend of Gathercole's said recently: "Terry was fiercely loyal, passionate and he believed an even playing field was the only path that swimming, world wide, should follow. He wanted and achieved the removal of drug takers and cheats from our sport".

Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association president and former Olympian and Australian head coach Terry Buck said: "Terry Gathercole was a pioneer in the world of swimming. He was in the Australian team in its peaks in the 50's and 60's, saw the sport at its worst in the 70's and was there as President when the Australian team finished second in the world at the Sydney Olympics.

"He has seen it all. What a lucky man to have the talent to be there. What a marvellous innings from a very special man who was passionate about swimming. His contribution was immeasurable".

Buck's comments sum up the thoughts of the entire Australian swimming fraternity.

Terry Gathercole is survived by his wife and childhood sweetheart, Carol, and sons, Ben and Tim and daughter, Gai.