

*Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center of the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles.* 2141 West Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90118. Dr. Wayne Wilson, (213) 730-9696

Founded more than fifty years ago on October 15, 1936 under the name Helms Athletic Foundation, the Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center is on the fast track to becoming one of the most important sports' libraries in the world. Indeed, it is the only sports resource center of its kind in the United States which

has in addition to its sports' focus, an ambitious yet well-organized acquisition philosophy. Housed in a visually pleasing edifice, its collections include, a variety of archival materials, scholarly journals, historically significant photographs, annual sport guides, an increasing number of oral histories of southern Californian Olympians, an unparalleled collection of coaching videos, the Avery Brundage Collection, and most importantly over 3,500 volumes of archival Olympic publications.

In 1930, W. R. "Bill" Schroeder conceived the idea of providing a museum



Interior of the Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center. Courtesy Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center of the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles.

which would not only honor great athletes, but would also provide a gathering place for scholars and laypersons alike, to view, ponder and discuss, that subject which has fascinated the peoples of the world since the beginning of time, sport. The idea became a reality when Paul Helms, owner of Helms Bakery in Culver City, California agreed to acquire modest headquarters in the William May Garland Building in downtown Los Angeles. The officially instituted Helms Athletic Foundation, was solely owned and supported by the Helms family for thirty-four years. During that time, Bill Schroeder, its curator, acquired a wealth of athletic memorabilia, sport books, important newspaper collections and archival materials. In 1970, United Savings and Loan became a benefactor for the financially troubled museum, and operations were further expanded when that institution merged with Citizen Savings in 1973. Under the banner of Citizen Savings Athletic Foundation, at 9800 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, the collection attracted 30,000 visitors annually and recognized outstanding achievements in over twenty sports, by athletes in all levels of competition. In 1981, Peter Ueberroth, President of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad, assumed the role of benefactor relinquishing it a few months later to First Interstate Bank. Britt House, an historically significant home in Los Angeles, was donated to the Amateur Athletic Foundation in 1985 by First Interstate Bank. It is on the beautifully landscaped grounds of Britt House that the Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, named in honor of the late Paul Ziffren, the chairman of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, was built.

The 10,000 square foot sunlight-enhanced library and a large meeting room are accompanied by two small reading rooms, a non-public shelving area and two video screening rooms, and stand adjacent to the Ziffren Center's multi-purpose pavilion. Although the Ziffren Center is now a reference library and not a museum, rotating memorabilia exhibits are to be found in showcases at the end of each of the library's stacks. In addition, in Britt House itself, rare Olympic artifacts are on show. The themes for the library displays vary in focus from international Olympic perspectives to Summer Swim Programs. One month the visitor is likely to see such Olympic artifacts as a 1984 Olympic Games torch and a Jesse Owens bronzed shoe and in the following month a collection of tee shirts, hats and water bottles, representative of the youth sport programs sponsored by the Foundation. Because Britt House was built with fine wood floors, walls, and showcases, it is quite dark and does not do justice to the uniqueness of the Olympic memorabilia displayed there. With the newly hired Collections Manager Karen Goddy on hand, this detraction is sure to be corrected.

As a research facility, the Ziffren Center is a sport historians's dream. Where else can one call a librarian, talk to a librarian who just happens to be a sport historian, request specific material or data and have the historically accurate answer within 36 hours or less? Dr. Wayne Wilson, Library Director, and his staff receive reference calls from all over the world and handle them

with efficiency and good humor. Those researchers, who are fortunate enough to live in or visit southern California are given expert assistance in using the 25,000 paper volumes, 10,000 microform volumes, 3,500 video volumes, 50,000 photographs and the on-line data bases. Among the thousands of library users are many organizations, halls of fame, well-known institutions such as the White House Library and Yale University, newspaper reporters from all over the globe as well as movie producers and directors. The aforementioned data bases which include DIALOG, BRS, SPORT DISCUS, DATATIMES and VUTEXT will be augmented with catalog dialing within the next twelve months.

The strongest content area of the collection is the Olympic material which includes 3,500 Olympic documents, reports, bids, programs and the Avery Brundage Collection. Included in the Olympic collection are over 400,000 pages of archival material from the 1984 Summer Olympic Games which are being converted to machine readable form by an on site document scanning system. In addition, the Center has acquired from the Carter Library all documents pertaining to the boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games.

Baseball appears to be the second strongest content area in the paper volumes section, while golf during the 30s, 40s and 50s, as well as boxing, basketball and football are well represented in the photographic collection. From 3,000 to 5,000 photographs covering such topics as major professional sports and amateur events, World Series, NBA All Star Games, NCAA basketball for both women and men, as well as such events as the Pan American and Goodwill Games are acquired each year. Naturally southern California sports have not been overlooked, as photographs as well as printed documents of surfing, roller skating, beach volleyball, and bodybuilding are well represented.

The Ziffren Center's strength is also its weakness; that is the reference materials available pertain only to sport. Those historians whose work focuses on sociocultural factors influencing the sport experience must still use general libraries. As is the case with most sport libraries, the holdings on women and minorities need supplementation. To remedy this deficiency, the Center has recently begun a subscription to *La Opinion* (Latino) and *Sentinel* (African-American). The excellent ability of the library staff to locate rare resources has saved scholars many arduous hours of needless detective work, however. In addition, there is the beginning of a genuine effort by Dr. Wilson to build a strong content area on women and minorities in sport. Here again the Center's ambitious acquisition program will certainly benefit future researchers as 2,000 to 3,000 new books that are useful to the study of history and social aspects of sport as well as material that will be of practical use to coaches and athletes are being added each year. The Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center, is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and alternate Saturdays as well as 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.