

INSPIRING TROJANS

At the University of Southern California, we have a proud history of winning, one that goes back to the very culture that helped create our school. This tradition also harkens back to the Greek philosophy of a strong mind, a strong spirit and a strong body. These things are not in conflict with one another, but provide a harmony that allows us to achieve great things. We see this in our Olympic success.

This success begins with recruiting young men and women who seek to achieve a superior outcome. It is fueled by coaches who have a wealth of knowledge in their sports. And it is accelerated by a competitive environment that challenges athletes to compete with and against the very best.

Consider Quincy Watts. As an undergraduate at USC, he ran track and became the best 400-meter runner in our university's history. He won the 1992 NCAA race at that distance in a meet record time that still stands. He also played on the USC football team, and in 2012, was inducted into the USC Athletic Hall of Fame.

At the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Quincy became a double Olympic champion, winning gold medals in the 400 meters and the 4x400 relay. He now coaches our Trojan sprinters, and inspires them with his experience as an elite-level athlete on the international stage.

Quincy inspires athletes such as Andre De Grasse. At the 2016 Olympics, Andre won three medals in track for Canada, having only taken up the sport late in high school. And then, just weeks after his outstanding performances, he returned to campus to

complete his degree. He is a top athlete pursuing a world-class education. And in doing so, he embodies the Olympic ideal of a strong mind and a strong body.

Athletes such as Andre not only thrive under great coaches and grow stronger thanks to great teammates, but they also have our extended Trojan Family that supports their pursuits. As a graduate of USC and an All-American football player, I don't just know this. I have lived this.

The Trojan Family is there for its athletes, and takes enormous pride in the university's Olympic tradition. USC has won a gold medal in every Summer Olympics since 1912. We are among the nation's leaders in team and individual championships across our 21 sports.

The Olympics embody all of the goals and ideals that we also cherish and hold true for our athletes at USC. In *USC: An Olympic Heritage, 1904-2016*, you will meet these remarkable student-athletes.

Lynn Swann '74
Athletic Director
University of Southern California

Lynn Swann currently serves as USC's athletic director. As an undergraduate at the university, he drew national attention as a wide receiver, and subsequently became the Most Valuable Player of Super Bowl X. He also distinguished himself as an international media broadcaster for the Olympics, as well as for Monday Night Football, before returning to USC as athletic director.



THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT

In reviving the modern Olympic Games, the French Baron Pierre de Coubertin was inspired by lofty ideals — a pair of philosophical statements that remained close to his heart: “The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle; the essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.”

Over the years, his philosophy has become synonymous with the Olympic movement, its principles reflected in the athletes’ most noble deeds. Los Angeles has twice hosted the Summer Games, each time producing stories of singular courage and sportsmanship. But these stories are not rare: At every Olympics, we witness moments of soaring generosity that transcend the competition, moments that lift the soul of our collective humanity. In these instances, we feel the essence of the Olympic spirit, its power resonating as strongly as the splendor of a gold medal.

Consider the story of France’s Lucien Duquesne. During a qualifying race for the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the 1928 Olympics, the celebrated Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi fell at the water jump, dropping his stopwatch to the ground. Rather than pass him, Duquesne lifted him to his feet, and even helped him find his watch in the water. The two runners continued the race side by side, and at the finish line, Nurmi offered first place to Duquesne. Duquesne, however, declined the opportunity to defeat the illustrious nine-time Olympic champion, graciously accepting the place he believed he deserved: second.

This is a striking story that brings the Olympic spirit to life in vivid color. It reminds us of the movement’s grandeur and meaning and the stirring way in which sport can evince fairness and goodwill. We see this same ethos in USC’s exceptional athletes — not only in those who rise to Olympic prominence, but also in those who compete throughout the year, representing our university in an array of sports.

And we certainly see it among Trojan Olympians. Swimmer Janet Evans’ legacy is legendary, as she inspired generations of athletes with her dedication to greatness, her determination to achieve spectacularly fast times in the water. In 1988, she won her three races by entire body lengths, competing more for the glory of sport and less to better any rival.

In Evans, we see the baron’s principles shine brightly, and she stands among the most renowned athletes of her era. But in truth, we see this same spirit at every Olympiad, including the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro, where the camaraderie between two distance runners inspired headlines around the world.

In the women’s 5,000-meter event, American Abbey D’Agostino and Nikki Hamblin of New Zealand collided about two-thirds of the way through their preliminary race, as a runner in front of them slowed her pace. D’Agostino and Hamblin fell to the track; when D’Agostino rose, she saw Hamblin was struggling, and paused to help her up. After some moments, they both tried to continue the race, but D’Agostino’s injuries hindered her. Hamblin remained by her side, but D’Agostino struggled mightily, and encouraged Hamblin to continue the race alone. They both crossed the finish line, but neither won a medal.

Nonetheless, D’Agostino’s gesture struck a chord with Hamblin. “Get up, get up, we have to finish this,” she recalled D’Agostino saying, just after they fell. Hamblin felt D’Agostino’s hand on her shoulder, gently encouraging her, and in that moment, felt uplifted: “You’re right. This is the Olympic Games,” she remembered thinking. “We have to finish this.”

These two women — strangers before the race and from opposite sides of the world — put competition aside for something more noble: compassion and kindness. “I’m so grateful for Abbey for doing that for me,” Hamblin would later say. “That girl is the Olympic spirit right there.”

Peter V. Ueberroth LLD '91
Trustee
University of Southern California

Peter V. Ueberroth, a long-standing USC Trustee, spearheaded the organization of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles as President of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee.

Mr. Ueberroth also served as chairman of the United States Olympic Committee from 2004 to 2008 (Athens 2004, Torino 2006 and Beijing 2008) and as the Commissioner of Major League Baseball from 1985 to 1989. Following the tremendous success of the 1984 Olympics, he received the Olympic Order (Gold), the highest award of the International Olympic movement.