THE FUTURE LEGACY OF
The big names are there. Quincy Watts. Janet Evans. Félix Sánchez. Cynthia Cooper-Dyke. Engraved on medals and plaques, the names of USC’s victors testify silently from burnished metal. Statuettes and trophies — some dulled by the patina of time, some still shiny from recent conquests — all remain a testament to athleticism long after the echoes of cheers vanish from the arenas. These prizes pack the trophy rooms in USC Athletics facilities where the next generation of Trojan Olympians will swim faster, jump higher and leap farther. The legacy continues through USC sports, with long-standing Olympic traditions, such as track and field and swimming. With Trojans rising to national collegiate power in sports including water polo, beach volleyball, tennis and golf (which returned to the Olympics in Rio in 2016) and the expansion of USC athletic programs and facilities, the future looks bright. “The Olympics embody all of the goals and ideals that we hold true for our athletes at USC,” said Lynn Swann ’74, USC athletic director. “We truly relish the long road to victory — not just a one-game championship, not just one season, but a challenge that is only offered and met every four years. Turning forward, we look to the next generation of athletes who exemplify these goals, principles and work ethic, and we have all of the pieces in place to continue to compete among the best.”
Olympic-caliber facilities at USC now include the John McKay Center, a $70 million, 110,000-square-foot athletic and academic center that was unveiled not long after USC’s Olympians returned from London in 2012. The equipment in its training room rivals gear used by professional sports teams, and the facility includes an indoor turf field, expansive weight room and a state-of-the-art digital media production facility used by all of USC’s 21 sports.

The $16 million Uytengsu Aquatics Center, reopened in early 2014, transformed USC aquatics with a new dive tower, dry-land training area and a 2,500-seat stadium. USC’s historic Heritage Hall, the home of Trojan athletics for more than 40 years, also reopened in 2014 to inspire a new generation of Olympic hopefuls. It houses a two-story museum space with an interactive touchscreen exhibit of Trojan Olympians, a map that represents countries for which Trojans have competed and gold medal replicas symbolizing USC’s streak of winning a gold at every Summer Olympics since 1912. And top volleyball and basketball players can spike and dunk at the spacious Galen Center arena, built in 2006.

USC is caring for Los Angeles’ longtime Olympic legacy as well. Using private funds, the university will renovate the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, preserving its historic nature while enhancing the stadium for fans and athletes.

The Games also influence the growth of USC sports through the achievements and vision of Olympians who now coach and guide young athletes. In 2013, basketball Hall of Famer, USC All-American and gold medalist Cynthia Cooper-Dyke became head coach of the women’s basketball program. And in 2015, gold medalist Dain Blanton joined the women’s sand volleyball program as an assistant coach, helping to lead the team to victory in the inaugural NCAA beach volleyball championship in 2016.

“Just like there are incredible professors and researchers and brilliant students and great musicians and actors and doctors here who are at the peak of their field, it’s really amazing when you look at the quality and number of Olympic athletes at this university,” said Tim Tessalone ’77, USC’s sports information director, who served as press chief at the USC Olympic Village in 1984. “Going forward, when you look at what this school has to offer an Olympian, USC is the perfect storm.”

With its facilities dedicated to sports performance, academic excellence and health, USC will carry forward the ancient Greeks’ Olympic ideal: A true champion achieves greatness in mind, body and spirit.
FIGHT ON!

AN OLYMPIC HERITAGE