

Summary 1995 Session of the International Olympic Academy Participants Association

SUMMARY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ACADEMY

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SESSION

JULY 1995

OLYMPIA, GREECE

As is true with any new endeavor, the formative years are the most difficult ones. Multiply this by the fact that the effort is an international one and the obstacles are more complex. However, if the spirit of the movement is strong it survives, and is stronger because of the effort. Such is the case with the IOAAA.

The Fourth IOAAA Working Session in Olympia, 18-23 July 1995, marked a turning point in our organization's short life. Confronted with challenges that threatened the existence of the IOAAA, we emerged stronger than we ever imagined. Strengthened by the election of a powerful executive board and promised support from the IOA, the IOAAA left Olympia as an indispensable tool in the spread of Olympism.

The structure of the meetings was in the standard IOA structure. In the mornings general sessions were held, followed by group discussions and activities in the afternoon. The video "The Story of the Olympic Movement" was shown in three parts over three days. 19 participants made individual presentations. Discussion groups covered the use of the Internet for communications, the development of a promotional brochure, creation of a more thorough application and questionnaire, and the need for conventional communication such as a newsletter. Ralf Stratmann-Kurzke (GER) and Kevin Whitney (GBR), the official Olympic Artist of the British Olympic Association, conducted art workshops each afternoon, which culminated with an art show before the final social evening. Dance classes were conducted by Elizabeth Hanley (US), also culminating with a dance recital held in conjunction with the art exhibit before the final social evening. Athletic activities included the usual sports such as basketball, football (soccer), volleyball, and new sports like fistball, Icelandic wrestling (which was a demonstration sport in the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games) and a modern Greek pentathlon.

Laurel Brassey Iversen (US), the first IOAAA president, returns to the office elected unanimously after all opponents dropped out with the announcement of her candidacy. The vice-president/reunion chair, a newly created post, is Srimal "Wikka" Wickremasinghe (Sri Lanka/UK). Returning to the IOAAA after a short absence is Yiannis Zouboulis (GRE) as secretary/treasurer. Our Greek IOA liaison officer is Katerina Protekdikou (GRE). Not to be forgotten is Ingolfur Hannesson (ICL). During his past four years of leadership Ingolfur led the IOAAA through difficult waters proving to be a talented diplomat. Like many leaders who have served during hard times, his efforts will not be fully appreciated until sometime in the future.

Intense discussions took place concerning IOA support for the IOAAA, but with an honest exchange of opinions and ideas IOA support appeared more definite than before. This new support is evidenced by the tentative offer made by the IOA that the IOAAA participate in next year's torch relay from Olympia to Atlanta. Whereas this offer awaits

the approval of key officials, the fact that it was made at all is symbolic of the fact that the IOAAA is rapidly becoming a viable member of the Olympic family.

In conclusion, a number of people made unselfish efforts to make this meeting worthwhile. Ian Stuart Brittain (UK) headed the report committee. Robert Block (US) and Laurel Brassey Iversen (US) contributed to the work of this committee, while Hilde Andreson (NOR) contributed countless hours typing papers and this report, even while suffering through a sudden case of bronchitis. This kind of dedication and commitment by a new IOAAA member speaks to the vitality and significance of the IOAAA. Another individual who deserves special recognition is Srimal "Wikka" Wickremasinghe (Sri Lanka/UK). Wikka served as secretary/treasurer and will be the new vice president/reunion chair. Over the past four years Wikka has put in many extra hours to make sure the IOAAA survived. His dedication and support for the organization is unwavering and not appreciated enough. Finally, the person who bears the most responsibility for the successful function of the fourth reunion held in Olympia is Gloria Castilla-Latke (ESP), the outgoing Reunion Chair. Gloria is a member of the 1985 IOA class that first conceived the idea of an IOA reunion. She has worked tirelessly since 1985 for the success of the IOAAA. Because the reunion went so smoothly speaks volumes to the abilities, dedication, and hard work she put forth over the past years. We look forward to Gloria's continued contributions to the IOAAA.

Thus was the fourth working session of the past participants of the IOA. Where many of us wondered what would become of the organization when we arrived in Olympia, we all left with a renewed dedication to the purpose of the IOAAA. As we left Olympia I thought of the words of Pindar:

*Creatures of a day,
Man is merely a shadow.
But when God given glory
comes upon him in victory,
a bright light shines upon us
and our life is sweet.
When the end comes,
the loss of flame brings darkness,
but his glory is bright forever.
So bright,
so brief,*

the Games are over.



1995 IOAPA Executive Board