

## CHARLES GARY ALLISON

\*1938 †13 May 2008

### To Gary's family and friends:

A valued Olympic friend over the last 20 years suddenly passed away: Charles Gary Allison. Being asked about his profession, he would modestly reply "I am a film maker". But he was a dedicated "Olympic ambassador" or even, some might say missionary, with an everlasting obsession to highlight the global Olympic ideal from its modern origins for the benefit of youth of the world. His special talent being that he could enthuse people to share in his visions and Olympic projects.

In recent years, Gary had become increasingly skeptical, witnessing an abuse of Olympic competition through drugs and doping. He was saddened further by the cheating of a coach from his own country who, by unfortunate coincidence had the same name as the first US Olympic coach in 1896. This historic year in Olympic history became the focal point of Gary's passion in sport.

One discovery driving Gary's fascination with the story of Olympic history was that the "father" of the Olympic Movement in the United States, William Milligan Sloane, was a close friend of Pierre de Coubertin. Gary was interested to understand and portray in his film-making the bold step towards international sport as it may have been conceived, beyond the Greek model, by these prominent figures at the inception of the Modern Olympic Games 1896.

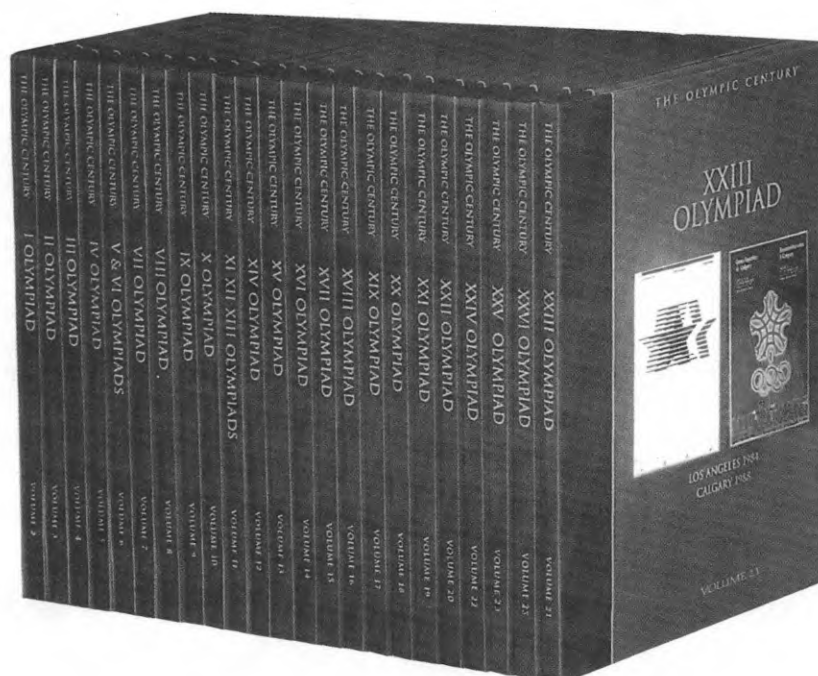
During the Games at Los Angeles in 1984, in Gary's home country, the Olympic world could see a highly awarded teleplay. This would later be transformed for the enjoyment by viewers from many different countries. Gary showed in pictures, in a narrative form, how the Americans came to the first Olympics in Athens 1896: mostly with students, to whom Coubertin dedicated the Games in celebration of their formative years. He urged that the young should develop mutual respect for each other and respect for their countries, which they might remember and foster during their leading civic lives.

The period between 1896 and 1996 was the topic for Gary's book series "The Olympic Century". As a result of searching the

international world for *Olympic data* for his projects, he visited during the mid-1980s, the German University of Sports Science in Cologne. Here he discovered partners and historians engaged in researching Olympic history. He saw Olympic treasures dating back to the beginning of the Olympic Movement housed at the Carl-Diem Archives and the Central German Library of Sports Science. From that point forward we had many enjoyable and productive meetings both in Cologne and in Los Angeles to discuss and elaborate upon his First Century Project. In supporting this project there was a lively exchange of ideas and sharing of information including personal analysis, observations and research including written sources and images. As a mark of the times we have lived through this sharing of information was started by telephone and traditional post, progressing on with technical developments to fax and then e-mail. The latter became the easiest way of pushing things forward in this modern age; our last intention was to meet in October 2008 in Los Angeles to proceed with the volume for 1896 starting with Sloane and Coubertin. The publication of this volume remains a challenge for his friends and is an appropriate dedication to honour Gary's intentions and to commemorate his life's work.

Cologne/Germany: May 2008

Dietrich



Charles Gary Allison's *First Century Project*