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**OBITUARIES**


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**Bud Greenspan**

**\* 18 September 1926 – † 25 December 2010**

Bud Greenspan died in New York City, at age 84, on Christmas Day, 25 December 2010, with his partner and business associate, Nancy Beffa, by his side. Born in New York City 18 September, 1926, Bud Greenspan has covered the Olympic Games as a writer, radio broadcaster and filmmaker for more than six decades. His trademark has been telling the intimate and often little known story that is universally understood and appreciated. In the words of IOC President Jacques Rogge, Greenspan is “a master in the art of telling the story of the Olympic Games.”

In 1948, as the 21-year-old Sports Director of New York radio station WHN, Greenspan made his first Olympic „broadcast“ from a pay telephone booth at Wembley stadium, the scene of the 1948 London Olympic Games. Four years later Greenspan wrote a story for *Reader's Digest* about U.S. weightlifter John Davis, “The Strongest Man in the World“. Greenspan had met Davis at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York where Greenspan was a „spear carrier“ amongst the extras and Davis, a baritone, was aspiring to become part of the Metropolitan Opera Chorus. Greenspan learned that Davis was not just a singer, but also the Olympic gold medal champion from 1948 and was going after his second gold medal in Helsinki in 1952. After his story was published, Greenspan followed Davis to Helsinki, resulting in production of his first film – the climax coming when Davis won his second gold medal.

Greenspan's most monumental work was *The Olympiad Series*, which for the first time visually documented the

history of the Olympic Games. First broadcast in 1976 as a 10-part series on the Public Broadcasting System in the United States, *The Olympiad* expanded to 22 one-hour shows and was aired in more than 80 countries around the world, and eventually earned him his first Emmy Award.

It took Bud Greenspan ten years; three million feet of rare, historic film; visits to more than 30 countries, and interviews with hundreds of past Olympic athletes to produce *The Olympiad*.

*The Olympiad Series* and the 1977 NBC movie-of-the-week film, *Wilma*, based on the life of sprinter Wilma Rudolph, paved the way for Greenspan's next 30 years of documenting the Olympic Games. In 1984, despite having lost his beloved wife and partner in film, Cappy Petrash, to cancer a year earlier, Greenspan and his company Cappy Productions produced the Official Film of the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Games, a 5-hour documentary titled: *16 Days of Glory – Los Angeles*. Since 1984 he has produced nine more Official Summer and Winter Olympic films including those for the 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games, the 1994 Lillehammer Games, the 1996 Atlanta Summer Games, the 1998 Nagano Games and those of Sydney 2000, Salt Lake City 2002, Athens 2004, Torino 2006, and Vancouver 2010 – a total of 10 for his career.

In addition to Official films, Greenspan has produced more than 150 vignettes and retrospective films on the Olympic Games. For the 1996 Centennial, Greenspan was selected by the IOC to produce two films: *100 Years of Olympic Glory*, a three-hour film exploring great inter-

national stories of the Olympic Games, and *America's Greatest Olympians*, a two-hour documentary that chronicled the inspiring stories of U.S. Olympic athletes. Others Olympic-themed films have included: *The First Miracle, the story of the 1960 USA Hockey Team*, *Bud Greenspan Remembers: The 1972 Munich Olympic Games* and *Bud Greenspan's Favorite Stories of Winter Olympic Glory* and *Bud Greenspan's Favorite Stories of Summer Olympics*. When the IOC opened its museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, Greenspan was commissioned to create a 36-monitor Multi-Screen visual and musical tribute to the Olympic Games titled *The Spirit of the Olympics* that is still on permanent display in the front hall.

Greenspan was also a writer for newspapers and magazines, contributing Olympic stories to *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Parade Magazine*. He also published three Olympic books: *Bud Greenspan's 100 Greatest Moments in Olympic History* (1995); *Frozen In Time: Great Moments at the Winter Games* (1997); and *An Olympian's Guide to Winning the Game of Life* (1997), a compilation of great quotes from the hundreds of interviews he had conducted during his career. He is also the author of *Play it Again, Bud! Sports History's Most Bizarre Blunders in Instant Replay* (1973) and *We Wuz Robbed!* (1976)

For his films, Greenspan has been honored with numerous awards including seven Emmys, the George Foster Peabody Award for Lifetime Achievement, the Directors Guild of America Life Time Achievement Award, the International Fair Play Award. He was a member of the United States Olympic Hall of Fame and the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. He called his proudest achievement the Olympic Order that was presented to him in 1985 by former IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch for his contribution to furthering the Olympic Movement. Greenspan's dream was to inspire future generations through his films. To help fulfill his dream the United States Olympic Committee in 2007 endowed a scholarship in honor of him at the USC School of Cinematic Arts.

Bud Greenspan was also one of the early members of the International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH), and remained a member throughout his life. In 2010 at Vancouver, we were able to honor him with presentation of the ISOH Vikelas Plaque for his contributions to Olympic History. He will be missed by all of us and by the Olympic Family.

Bill Mallon and David Wallechinsky