

568341
RED15

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2003

Honorable George W. Bush
President, United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Olympic Games will be held next summer in Athens, Greece, the site of the first modern era Games that took place in 1896. This will be a historic occasion, and will provide a unique opportunity for you to send a delegation of former American Olympic Champions as your personal representatives to Athens.

Sending a delegation of former Olympic Gold Medal winners representing the White House and the United States of America would be an enormously popular act of diplomacy and statesmanship. Totalling perhaps six in number, some of the American heroes we might suggest to be included in the group would represent a cross section of the nation:

Bob Mathias – Decathlon champion – 1948 (London) and 1952 (Helsinki)
Dr. Sammy Lee – Diving – 1948 (London) and 1952 (Helsinki)
Billy Mills – 10,000 meter champion – 1964 (Tokyo)
Patricia McCormick – Diving – 1952 (Helsinki) and 1956 (Melbourne)
Rafer Johnson – Decathlon – 1960 (Rome)
Pablo Morales – Swimming – 1984 (Los Angeles) and 1992 (Barcelona)

One of the most celebrated heroes of the Olympics is gold medallist Bob Mathias. He won the Decathlon in 1948 at the age of 17 (the youngest to ever win this grueling event) in London, England and he repeated this extraordinary achievement in 1952 in Helsinki, Finland. He is also a former Republican Congressman from Tulare in the central valley of California (1965 – 1975).

As a historical note, Bob Mathias, along with Jesse Owens and Dr. Sammy Lee, were appointed by President Eisenhower to be his Presidential representatives to the 1956 Melbourne, Australia Games. Mathias has also made three goodwill trips throughout the world for our State Department and was one of the Congressional representatives to the 1972 Munich Olympics.

In 1948, Dr. Sammy Lee became the first United States gold medallist of Asian descent. He competed in the platform and springboard diving competitions, medalling in both. He followed this historic accomplishment with another gold medal performance in the 1952 games, to become the first male diver from the United States to win back-to-back gold medals in the sport of diving. During his Olympic pursuit, Dr. Sammy Lee obtained his degree in medicine from the University of Southern California and went on to coach at the Olympic level.

Billy Mills is an Oglala Sioux Indian from Pine Ridge, South Dakota who found strength in the sport of distance running after being orphaned at a young age. At the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan, Mills broke a world record and became the first American to win gold in the 10,000m. To date, no other American has accomplished this feat. Billy Mills remains a strong Native American figure and is a spokesman for Running Strong for American Indian Youth.

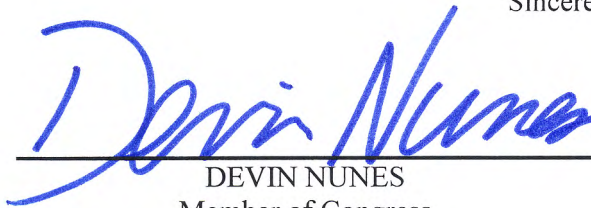
At the Olympic Games in Helsinki (1952) and Melbourne (1956), Patricia McCormick became the only female diver in history to win four Olympic gold medals. McCormick has been matched only by the gold medals won by male diver, Greg Louganis. As a female during the 1950s, Patricia McCormick's accomplishments in springboard and platform diving were unequaled.

Rafer Johnson became a gold medallist in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. He competed in the decathlon, setting an Olympic record in the sport. As an African American, Johnson overcame a childhood atmosphere of segregation, discrimination and poverty to persevere in track and field at the Olympic level.

Between the 1984 Los Angeles and 1992 Barcelona Olympics, Pablo Morales came to be known as the 'Comeback Kid.' After winning two silver and one gold medal at the Los Angeles games, this Cuban American went on to become the oldest Olympic gold medallist in swimming during the Barcelona Olympics after a hiatus from the sport. In the swimming community he is admired for his sportsmanship and ability to be a team player in such an individual sport.

Mr. President, we would appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this request, and we stand ready to discuss it with you or your staff at anytime.

Sincerely,



DEVIN NUNES
Member of Congress



DANA ROHRABACHER
Member of Congress