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68TH UIPM CONGRESS: UIPM HALL OF FAME UNVEILED IN PRESENCE OF IOC PRESIDENT



The first 10 members of the UIPM Hall of Fame were inducted during the official opening of the 68th UIPM Congress in the presence of Dr Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee.

The UIPM Hall of Fame seeks to recognise athletes, administrators and other individuals who have made a unique impact on the core Olympic sport of Modern Pentathlon, starting with its founder, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

The first 10 inductees named in a ceremony at the Imperial Hall in Frankfurt's City Hall were:

- Baron Pierre de Coubertin (FRA): Founder of the modern Olympic Movement and creator of Modern Pentathlon
- General George Smith Patton (USA): 5th place in the first Olympic Games Stockholm 1912
- General Sven Thofelt (SWE): Gold medal in Amsterdam 1928, UIPM General Secretary
- William Grut (SWE): Gold medal in London 1948, UIPMB General Secretary and long-serving UIPMB President
- Pavel Lednev (USSR): Bronze medallist in Mexico 1968 and Munich 1972, silver medallist in Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980; pentathlon legend
- HM King Constantine (GRE): UIPM Honorary Patron, gold medallist in sailing, Rome 1960, Olympic Academy
- Andras Balczo (HUN): Gold medallist in Munich 1972, active in the social movement after retirement
- Juan Antonio Samaranch (ESP): IOC President (1980-2001) who opened the door for Modern Pentathlon to include women in the Olympic programme in 2000
- Stephanie Cook (GBR): First women's gold medallist in Sydney 2000, now a respected doctor
- Zsuzsanna Voros (HUN): Gold medallist in Athens 2004, now a pentathlon coach

Another batch of names will be added in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Stephanie Cook and Zsuzsanna Voros attended last night's ceremony and were presented with Hall of Fame certificates. Juan Antonio Samaranch Jnr, the Vice-President of both UIPM and the IOC, received a posthumous certificate on behalf of his late father.

Dr Bach praised the progress of Modern Pentathlon as an Olympic sport as he addressed an audience numbering over 200 at the official opening of UIPM Congress 2016, which takes place in Frankfurt on November 25/26.

The IOC President, a former Olympic fencer for Germany, said he was greatly impressed with the innovation that has been key to the improvement of Modern Pentathlon as an Olympic sport, and declared that "the sky has no limit" as he handed over a gift to the UIPM President Dr Klaus Schormann.

"Here in my home country I am very familiar with these surroundings and I am happy to be here," said Dr Bach.

"Modern Pentathlon is the only sport that was founded for the Olympic Games by Pierre de Coubertin, who wanted to find the complete athlete. This is what we are striving for: excellence and perfection, in our sports and in our organisation as well.

"I have had a connection with Modern Pentathlon for many years and I have been able to follow the great developments which demonstrate excellence in the development of sport.

"You always have to change: that's what Modern Pentathlon has embraced. In your new competition format in fencing you have done a lot for the presentation of your sport.

"I hope that this will continue into the future. I'm happy and proud of what you have achieved in Rio. The Olympic Games were the most-watched Games in our history and across all genders it was the most popular, relevant Olympic Games we ever had.

"Modern Pentathlon has played an important role by modernising sport, combining and creating more attraction for the audience. Always modernise, be ambitious, like the athletes who compete with so much passion."

The Lord Mayor of Frankfurt, Peter Feldmann, welcomed the UIPM and its guests to the city and exchanged gifts with Dr Klaus Schormann, the UIPM President, and Dr Bach.

Dr Schormann, who will stand at Congress for a seventh term as UIPM President, said: "I am very proud that the IOC President has joined us this evening. We have been at many competitions together. As Dr Bach is also a fencer there is a special connection between him and our sport.

"The IOC Agenda 2020 is having a major effect on international sport, on the bidding procedure for events and on International Federations, as they have more responsibilities now. It's a new milestone for the future and UIPM has a special wish to include Mixed Relay in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games."

As he officially declared the 68th UIPM Congress open, Dr Schormann added: "We should remember at all times the spirit of Coubertin and should listen to each other as we discuss our sport and work to achieve something together.

"We are a global sport in the Olympic movement with new federations joining for the first time, and we should all act as visionaries and work together with all ethnic groups and religions. The Olympic movement is about peace, about using sport and education as a vehicle for a better world."