



For Immediate Release

WOA honours Olympians for Life inductees

PyeongChang, South Korea; 17 February 2018

World Olympians Association has today unveiled the names of the five Olympians included in the winter edition of its *Olympians for Life* project. The presentation and photo exhibition, which took place at a special reception hosted in the IOC Olympic Club at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games, honoured Olympians who have made an incredible contribution to society.

The Olympians are:

- **Tracy Evans OLY** (Freestyle Skiing, USA) – for challenging gender stereotypes and championing the universal right to play
- **Manuela Di Centa OLY** (Cross-country Skiing, Italy) – for always striving to surmount Everest in sport and in life
- **Chiharu Igaya OLY** (Alpine Skiing, Japan) – for his efforts through a lifetime of giving back to sport
- **Devon Harris OLY** (Bobsleigh, Jamaica) – for dreaming the impossible and inspiring others to never give up
- **Johann Koss OLY** (Speed Skating, Norway) – for using the power of sport to change lives and build a better, more harmonious world

First launched during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, the exhibition recognises Olympians who have made a significant impact on the lives of others, both during and after their athletic careers, illustrating that Olympians have the power and the responsibility to help create a better, more harmonious world.

The PyeongChang 2018 edition was officially opened by **WOA Patron HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco OLY**, with **IOC President Thomas Bach OLY** and other high profile Olympians and IOC Members in attendance.

WOA President Joël Bouzou OLY said:

“We are delighted to welcome these five incredible Olympians as our newest Olympians for Life inductees. All have earned the honour to appear in this exhibition through the inspiring work they have done, both as athletes and as role models in society.

“Being an Olympian doesn’t end when you stop competing, it is a lifelong badge that is carried with you. Our project highlights just a few of the thousands of Olympians worldwide who are working every day to help make the world a better place.”

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

You can find out more about *Olympians for Life* on: <https://olympians.org/olympians/olympians-for-life/>

Images available upon request.

Tracy Evans OLY (Freestyle Skiing, USA)

A three-time Olympian (1994, 1998 & 2002) who, after volunteering in Rwanda, saw first-hand the effects of genocide on communities and specifically the impact on gender roles, relationships and inequality for boys and girls in those communities. Evans founded non-profit organisation *Kids Play International* in 2008, with the mission of using sport as a catalyst to promote gender equity in communities impacted by genocide. She continues to inspire children through the Olympic ideals of fair play, mutual respect and solidarity.

Manuela Di Centa OLY (Cross-country Skiing, Italy)

A double Olympic champion, with a total of seven Olympic medals to her name, Di Centa was the first Italian woman to compete at five Olympic Games (1984-1998). In 2003, she also became the first Italian woman to climb Mount Everest. She is an Honorary IOC Member and former vice-president of the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI). She currently works with the Italian government to promote sport in schools.

Chiharu Igaya OLY (Alpine Skiing, Japan)

An Olympic silver medallist, Igaya has devoted his life to sports administration. After finishing his competitive career, the three-time Olympian (1952-1960) was an IOC Member from 1982 to 2011, serving on the Executive Board and as Vice-President, and was made an Honorary IOC Member in 2012. Amongst his other roles, he has served on boards and committees for the International Ski Federation, the International Triathlon Union and the World Anti-Doping Authority as well as an advisor to the Japanese government on sports issues.

Devon Harris OLY (Bobsleigh, Jamaica)

A member of the original 1988 Jamaican bobsleigh team, the three-time Olympian (1988, 1992 & 1998) grew up in poverty in Kingston Jamaica before using sport to find success in life. Harris now

uses his Olympic experience to inspire others, working as a motivational speaker and having written a children's book on the story of the Jamaican bobsleigh team. In 2006, Harris founded the *Keep On Pushing* Foundation, which supports the education of kids in disadvantaged communities.

Johann Koss OLY (Speed Skating, Norway)

As a four-time Olympic gold medallist, Koss inspired millions. After his sporting career, the double Olympian (1992 & 1994) trained as a physician, before going on to become a UNICEF ambassador and an IOC Member. In 2000, he founded international humanitarian organisation *Right To Play*, which uses sport and play as a tool for the development of children and youth in the most disadvantaged areas of the world.

About World Olympians Association

WOA is the member organisation for the more than 120,000 Olympians worldwide. Our remit is to work for the benefit of all Olympians at all stages of their lives, empowering them to serve society and help make the world a better place. With 149 member National Olympians Associations spread across all five continents, WOA provides support to Olympian-run events and projects based on the Olympic ideals laid down by the founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin.

For more information

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