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Editorial

IN MEMORIAN

JUAN ANTONIO SAMRANCH TORELLÓ

17 July 1920 – 21 April 2010

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Editors-in-Chief of Journal of Human Sport and Exercise

The University of Alicante is mourning our *Lord of the rings*, whose contribution to Olympic movement has supported the extent and modernization of the Olympic ideology.

Juan Antonio Samaranch Torelló was born in Barcelona on the 17th of July, 1920. He graduated in Commerce at the Barcelona Campus of the IESE Business School, he was Councilor at the City Hall of Barcelona, President of the Council of Barcelona, National Delegate for Sports and Physical Education, and Spanish Ambassador to the Soviet Union and to the Republic of Mongolia.

In the field of the Sport Organization, he hold the positions of President of the Spanish Federation of Skating, *Chef de mission* at the Olympic Games in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Roma and Tokyo, Vice-president of the International Committee of the Mediterranean Games, President of the *Salón Náutico Internacional* of Barcelona, President of the Spanish National Olympic Committee and President of the International Olympic Committee (1980).

As President of the IOC, he developed an extraordinary task, recognized internationally, in favor of the extent and modernization of the Olympic ideology. During his presidency, the IOC kept a solid policy towards phenomena like racism or drug taking and at the same time tightened its moral authority at international level as a Non Governmental Organization.

In Spain, Samaranch was awarded several times, he received the *Grandes Cruces de la Orden del Mérito Civil*, *del Mérito Naval*, *del Mérito Militar* and of the *Orden de Cisneros*. He was awarded with them before turning seventy. Also, he was highly recognized while he hold the



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position of President at the IOC, he was awarded with the Gold Medal of the city of Barcelona (1985), the title of Marquis of Samaranch (December 27th, 1991), the Special Prize of the XXV anniversary of the Spanish Olympic Academy (1994), the first Gold Medal of the Union of the Catalonia Sports Federations (1999) or the *Collar de la Orden de Isabel La Católica* (March 2000). The Spanish Olympic Committee awarded him with its Special Prize 2007.

His contributions in favor of world peace, harmony between the people, as well as the spread of sport and the Olympic ideology credited him for being greatly awarded and honored internationally, he received, among others: the Seoul Peace Prize (1990) - valued in 300.000 US Dollars which he earmarked for the construction of the Olympic Museum in Laussane -, the Jesse Owens Global Prize (1992), the *Collar de Oro del Mérito de la IAAF* (1992), the Merit Award of the Association of National Olympic Committees (1992), the first Coubertin Gold Prize of the French Olympic Committee (1992), the FIFA Gold Medal of Honor (1996), the Award 'Architect of Peace' of the U.S. Olympic Committee (1996), the Gold Medal of the Jean Monnet Europe Foundation (1996) or the Grand Officer insignia of the French National Order of the Legion of Honor (1997).

He was awarded Doctor *honoris causa* by the universities of: Sofia, Calgary, Carolina of Prague (1988), Budapest (1988), Politécnica de Madrid (1990), Beijing (1990), Alicante (1992), Comenio (sic) of Bratislava (1992), Bucarest (1994), Sorbonne (1995), Granada (1997), Huelva (1998), Srinakarin Viroj in Thailand (1998), Korea National University of Physical Education (1999), Camilo José Cela (2002) (where a chair was created with his name) and European University, both in Madrid (2009). Moreover, he is an honorary academic of the Royal Academy of Catalonia (1995) and of the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts (1997).

In 1992, the University of Alicante wanted to recognize his career and most of all the Olympic movement. Through a ceremony supported by the *laudation* of the professor Gabriel Real and with the presence of Her Royal Highness *Infanta* Cristina of Spain, the University of Alicante paid homage to the sports world and expressed a declaration of intention as a modern university committing with the sport.

Eighteen years later, we, who witnessed the above, have the duty to remember the words that Mr. Jose Antonio Samaranch addressed to the University Community in that ceremony:

“The sports world admires and deeply needs the world of culture. Let me ask you University people, representatives *par excellence* of the culture world, to adopt the same enthusiastic attitude towards sport as we, sportspeople, adopt towards your world...”

With this sentence, it becomes evident that universities must watch over and contribute to spread the principles of the Olympic Movement. Five years ago, the first Center of Olympic Studies in the Region of Valencia was established in our University of Alicante. This institution keeps the essence of these principles, contributing to the construction of a better and more pacific world, educating society by means of the sport, without any type of racism and within the Olympic spirit, which demands mutual understanding, friendship spirit, solidarity and fair play.

José Antonio Samaranch will go down in history as the second president of the IOC who held more time this position (21 years) behind Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who was IOC president for almost 30 years (1896-1925).

We were left by the man who revolutionized Olympism.