

Neil Farrell

Inducted 1993

Without dedicated volunteers such as Neil Farrell, the annals of Canadian sporting history would be the poorer. And like so many others, Neil's contributions have been made over a long and full lifetime.

A lover of track and field, Neil tested himself as a distance runner, turning his attentions to administration when his competitive days were over, becoming heavily involved with the Hamilton Olympic Club, which he served in many capacities. It was through the Club, in fact, that Neil as its president attended his first British Empire and Commonwealth Games, in 1954 when the Games were held in Vancouver. Four years later, he was back at the Games as a manager, a position he would hold in one form or another for the next 28 years.

For the 1958 Cardiff Games, Neil was manager of the Canadian Track and Field Team. In 1960, he fulfilled the same duties at the Rome Olympics. In 1966, he was assistant manager of the Canadian team competing at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games at Kingston, Jamaica. And in 1970, he assumed responsibility for the entire Canadian operation when he was appointed general team manager for the first Edinburgh Games. In 1974 he travelled half way around the world to Christchurch, New Zealand, as assistant team manager.

One of the crowning moments of Neil's career as a sport volunteer par excellence came in 1978 when, as general team manager, he led the Canadian team to the highly successful Edmonton Games.

Neil continued his dedicated service throughout the 1980s, serving as assistant manager in 1982 at Brisbane and again in 1986 when the Games returned to Edinburgh.

A quiet, unassuming man, Neil also offered unselfish and dedicated service away from the playing field. He spent untold hours as honorary secretary of the British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association of Canada, a position he held for 23 years. At the same time, he held senior positions with the Canadian Olympic Association and the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, working at the local as well as the national level. He also served the Commonwealth Games Federation as vice president of the Americas from 1978 to 1986.

In 1966 Neil was honoured by the Ontario Ministry of Education with a citation recognizing his outstanding contributions to the sporting life of the City of Hamilton. In 1968 he was awarded the Ontario sport achievement award. And in 1992, he received the Canada 125 medal, awarded in recognition of his significant contributions to Canada, to his community, and to his fellow Canadians.

Neil was also personally recognized in 1982 by former prime Minister Pierre Trudeau for his contributions to "resolving the difficulty caused by the issue of New Zealand's sporting contacts with South Africa," a result which permitted full participation by the nations of the Commonwealth in the Brisbane Games.

If there was work to be done, Neil was there — with an abundance of energy, a kind heart and devotion to duty. It is fitting that in paying tribute to Neil Farrell, these words become his legacy.

