



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

Press release

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## **GENDER EQUALITY ADVOCATES AND COACHES RECEIVE IOC AWARDS**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) this evening celebrated six role models and change-makers in advancing women in and through sport; and recognised two outstanding coaches for their lifetime achievements.

### **2017 IOC Women and Sport Awards: six trophies, one goal**

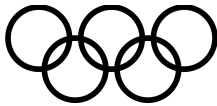
Finnish advocate of grassroots sports and gender equality **Mrs Birgitta Kervinen** was awarded the World Trophy for her tireless and long-standing efforts to promote gender equality in sport and society. Having enjoyed an extensive and influential career as a voluntary sports leader both nationally and internationally, Kervinen has been instrumental in uplifting and mainstreaming gender equality, and is a role model for many women and girls.

Five Continental Trophies were awarded to the following people:

- **Winner for Africa: Ms Lidé Anne Ouoba Zoma (Burkina Faso)**  
As one of the first women in her country to compete in long-distance running at an international level, Zoma has worked towards removing the barriers that prevent girls from participating in sport.
- **Winner for the Americas: Dr Patricia Sangenis (Argentina)**  
A medical doctor and former athlete, Dr Sangenis has worked towards raising awareness of female athlete health, helping to debunk myths about women's sporting performance.
- **Winner for Asia: Japan Ladies Tennis Federation (Japan)**  
The Japan Ladies Tennis Federation has actively promoted women's participation in tennis in a variety of ways, producing world-class Japanese players along the way and increasing women's participation in sport.
- **Winner for Europe: Ms Androulla Vassiliou (Cyprus)**  
The Former European Commissioner for Sport has been instrumental in placing gender equality in sport within European Union policy-making.
- **Winner for Oceania: Mrs Judy Otto (Palau)**  
The President of the Palau Swimming Association has played a key role in encouraging women's sport participation in the country and enhancing commitment to health and active living.

For more information on the winners and the Trophies, [read the IOC Women and Sport Awards 2017 Brochure](#).

IOC Women in Sport Commission Chair Lydia Nsekera congratulated the winners on their achievements and said: "I am delighted that the IOC is honouring so many inspirational



role models with this year's IOC Women and Sport Awards. Each winner has shown what can be achieved by those who are committed to empowering women and girls through sport – giving them the opportunity to break free of barriers and negative stereotypes and demonstrate what they are truly capable of.”

Introduced in 2000, the IOC Women and Sport Awards are given to women, men or organisations who have made remarkable contributions to the development, encouragement and reinforcement of women's participation in sport. One World Trophy and five Continental Trophies are awarded every year.

### **IOC Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards: recognising those behind the athletes**

Acknowledging the exceptional role of coaches in an athlete's life, the IOC's first-ever Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards were given to retired Japanese synchronised swimming coach **Kaneko Masako** and retired American swimming coach **Jon Urbanek**.

**Kaneko Masako (JAP)** has set a leading example both as a swimmer and a coach since the beginning of synchronised swimming in her country. As a coach, she has achieved outstanding success developing swimmers from beginner to Olympic-standard. Masako is the only person to have coached medal-winning swimmers at every Olympic Games from 1984 to 2004 and to have medal winners in all but one World Championships from 1978 to 2007.

**Jon Urbanek (USA)** has developed swimmers into Olympic medallists, world champions and world record holders throughout his coaching career. He has taken over 40 swimmers to represent their country at six editions of the Olympic Games from Barcelona 1992 to London 2012, bringing home over 20 Olympic medals, including 11 golds. Highly respected by his athletes, Urbanek has also contributed significantly to their personal development beyond the swimming arena.

IOC Athletes' Entourage Commission Chair Sergey Bubka said: “The role of a coach for an athlete goes beyond the field. It is about a journey and long-term collaboration. It is a great pleasure to honour the first two winners of the IOC Coaches Lifetime Achievement Awards for their outstanding contributions to Olympians' live and the Olympic Movement.”

This Award, given to one female and one male retired coach, is an initiative of the IOC Athletes' Entourage Commission to raise awareness about the athletes' entourage and recognise the important role coaches play in supporting athletes on the road to their sporting dreams.

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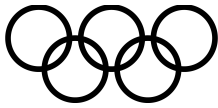
*The International Olympic Committee is a not-for-profit independent international organisation made up of volunteers, which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of 3.25 million US dollars goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.*

For more information, please contact the IOC Media Relations Team:

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### **Broadcast quality footage**

[The IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com/](http://iocnewsroom.com/)



### Videos

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/iocmedia](http://www.youtube.com/iocmedia)

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