



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

**Story script**

**The International Olympic Committee (IOC) OFFERS THE FOLLOWING VIDEO NEWS RELEASE TO ALL NEWS AGENCIES, BROADCASTERS AND ALL ONLINE PLATFORMS FREE OF CHARGE.**

**Story Headline:** Birgitta Kervinen of Finland wins IOC Women and Sport 2017 World Trophy

**Event:** 2017 IOC Women and Sport Awards

**Location:** Palais de Beaulieu, Lausanne, Switzerland

**Date:** 9 November 2017

2017 IOC Women and Sport Award Winners:

**WORLD TROPHY WINNER**

MRS BIRGITTA KERVINEN (FINLAND)

**CONTINENTAL TROPHY WINNERS**

Europe: MS ANDROULLA VASSILIOU (CYPRUS)

Oceania: MRS JUDY OTTO (PALAU)

Americas: DR PATRICIA SANGENIS (ARGENTINA)

Africa: MS LIDÉ ANNE OUOBA ZOMA (BURKINA FASO)

Asia: JAPAN LADIES TENNIS FEDERATION (JAPAN)

**IOC COACHES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS**



MRS KANEKO MASAOKO (JAPAN)

MR JON URBANCHEK (USA)

### **STORY SCRIPT**

Finnish grassroots sports legend Birgitta Kervinen and five other role models and change makers were tonight honoured with the 2017 IOC Women and Sport Awards at a ceremony in Lausanne, Switzerland. Two outstanding coaches were also recognised for their lifetime achievements.

IOC president Thomas Bach said: “The prize winners tonight will play an important role because they’re our great role models, and they can encourage even more women to take leadership positions in sport and help us even more to drive gender equality to new heights”.

### **WORLD TROPHY WINNER**

MRS BIRGITTA KERVINEN (FINLAND)

A passionate advocate of gender equality and grassroots sport, Finland’s Birgitta Kervinen has served for more than 40 years as a voluntary sports leader.



For more than 20 years she worked as an educator, coach and trainer, teaching hundreds of girls to be physically active.

She's perhaps best known however for her work with the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO), a non-profit umbrella organisation of National Sport Confederations and NOCs in 33 countries, serving as Vice President (2001-2007) and President (2007-2015).

During this time she worked tirelessly to raise the issue of gender equality and strengthened cooperation with key EU stakeholders. Mrs Kervinen was also instrumental in the launch of the Women's International Leadership Development Programme (WILD), successfully implemented in seven European countries.

She's also been active with the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG).

A true pioneer, she is a role model for countless women and girls.

## **CONTINENTAL TROPHY WINNERS**

Europe: MS ANDROULLA VASSILIOU (CYPRUS)

Androulla Vassiliou was awarded the Europe 2017 Women and Sport Continental trophy.



Former European Commissioner for Sport Androulla Vassiliou has worked systematically to ensure gender equality in sport is among the top priorities of the European Commission.

A practising lawyer and former member of parliament in Cyprus, Ms Vassiliou led the development of the European Sport policy, redressing the under-representation of women in sport and dedicating part of the budget to prevention of gender violence against women.

Ms Vassiliou's work has increased the prominence of gender equality across a variety of European institutions.

#### Oceania: MRS JUDY OTTO (PALAU)

Judy Otto was awarded the Oceania 2017 Women and Sport Continental trophy.

As President of the Palau Swimming Association and a member of the Palau Women and Sports Commission, Mrs Judy Otto has played a key role in advocating women's sports participation within the country.

Her initiatives have included the development of a water aerobics programme, a year-round learn-to-swim programme, a Palau Junior Swim team, and the continuous development of swimming facilities, coaches and administrators.



In addition she has worked to support and enhance commitment to health and active living for both women and men in local communities.

Americas: DR PATRICIA SANGENIS (ARGENTINA)

Dr Patricia Sangenis was awarded the Americas 2017 Women and Sport Continental trophy.

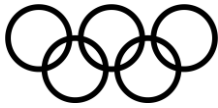
Medical doctor and former athlete Patricia Sangenis has worked towards raising awareness of female athletes health and helping to abolish myths about women's sporting performance.

Chair of the Women and Sport Commission within the Argentine Olympic Committee, for 20 years she has been giving motivational and health talks in schools, focused on encouraging girls to get involved in sports activities.

Dr Sangenis has also promoted data collection systems throughout Argentina to accurately measure the number of women in sports.

As a print columnist and TV presenter Dr Sangenis has tirelessly promoted physical activity and sport amongst women, whilst raising the issue of gender equality.

Africa: MS LIDÉ ANNE OUOBA ZOMA (BURKINA FASO)



Lidé Ann Ouoba Zoma was awarded the African 2017 Women and Sport Continental trophy.

A former international long-distance runner, Lidé Anne Ouoba Zoma has dedicated her life to Burkinabe athletics as an athlete, coach and promoter.

Founder of the Béogbiiga (Children of Tomorrow) Association, she is committed to promoting children through sports competitions and scholarships.

One of the first women to be elected to the executive board of the Burkina Athletics Federation, she's used her position to increase decision-making opportunities for women.

She was also instrumental in the creation of the federation's Women and Sport Commission.

Ms Ouoba has played a key role in establishing athletics schools within Burkina Faso, and has coached many young girls within the sport.

Asia: JAPAN LADIES TENNIS FEDERATION (JAPAN)

The Japan Ladies Tennis Federation was awarded the Asia 2017 Women and Sport Continental trophy.

The award-winning JLTF, led by its president Ms Yaeko Takemasa has actively promoted women's participation in tennis, producing world-class



players in the process.

Founded in 1967 the federation now has 47 branches covering the whole of Japan.

In addition to establishing national women's tennis championships, the JLTF holds various tournaments from grassroots to elite levels.

It's also established a fund aimed at making society more active, including participants with disabilities.

The JLTF has deservedly received many awards in recognition of its hard work.

### **IOC COACHES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

KANEKO MASAOKO (Japan) and JON URBANCHEK (USA)

Former synchronised swimming coach Kaneko Masako 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.

Retired American swimming coach Jon Urbanchek developed swimmers



into Olympic medallists, world champions and world record holders throughout his coaching career.

He took more than 40 swimmers to six editions of the Olympic Games from Barcelona 1992 to London 2012, bringing home over 20 Olympic medals including 11 golds.

This new award acknowledges the exceptional role of coaches in an athlete's life.

#### WOMEN AND SPORT BACKGROUND

Women first competed at the Olympic Games Paris 1900, before they had even been granted the right to vote in most countries around the world. While only 22 women competed at the 1900 Games, female participation has increased steadily since then and at the Olympic Games Rio 2016, women accounted for a record 45 per cent of more than 11,000 athletes who took part.

The IOC Women and Sport Awards were introduced in the year 2000 to recognise the outstanding achievements and contributions of those who promote gender equality in sport.





Every year, the IOC invites each National Olympic Committee, International Federation and Continental Association to nominate a person or association active in promoting gender equality and the presence of women in their sport or country.

An IOC jury composed of members of the IOC Women in Sport Commission reviews the nominations and chooses six winners each year including the World Trophy Winner and five Continental Trophy winners. This year's winners were selected from among 50 strong candidates.

Sport provides a fantastic opportunity for girls and women to break free of barriers and negative stereotypes, giving them the chance to demonstrate what they are truly capable of.

End