

**USATF NATIONAL OFFICIALS COMMITTEE**

**HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY**

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2013**

**REMARKS OF EDWARD R. KOCH**

Thank you very much. I have a couple of thoughts that came to mind when I learned that I was to receive this honor, and also want to say thank you to some people.

One thought was that I am humbled by my fellow inductees. Gene Edmonds was already a legendary clerk when I was still wet behind the ears. And as for Gary Westerfield, my own track club (the New Jersey Striders) is very active in racewalking, so I know better than most the many contributions that he has made for our sport.

The other thought was a reflection on the past few months since I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. It has been a difficult few months and I face a bone marrow transplant next week, but I have appreciated the many kind words and prayers that you all have offered. The doctors say I am close to remission and I hope to be out there officiating with many of you in 2014.

As for the thank you list, I want to echo the words of Reverend Kenny earlier and thank God for allowing me to be here tonight and for all the blessings He has given me in my lifetime.

I also want to thank my family. My Mom, Dad, and siblings are not here tonight - Dad and my older sister are looking down on us - but some family members are.

My wife Cora is here. As Sue said, she is a tennis player and she had to learn about track & field. I have a story about that.

We were married about a year when I took Cora to her first Penn Relays. I was introducing her to the other clerks in the paddock when a chief told me that someone had called in sick and we were shorthanded. In my sweetest voice, I went to Cora and asked her "Honey, could you collect relay cards for a few hours until we can find a substitute?" Well, a few hours turned into a day, and one day turned into two days, and two days turned into three long days. The good news is that she did not divorce me on the spot. Here she is sixteen years later and today she is a certified official.

My boys Eddie and Bill are also here. And as any official trying to raise a young family, I found it difficult at times. I'd tell the boys that I had to go away to strange places like Eugene or Philadelphia or Indianapolis, and they could not appreciate why I had to go. But eventually they understood and I have a story about that.

It begins before the boys were born at the 1996 Olympic Trials and Carl Lewis is trying to make his 4th Olympic team. In his first event, he came in dead last in the 100 meter final and didn't yet make the team. The next day, he comes for the check-in of the long jump qualifying. I ask him if he has his competitor's number and he says that he lost it. In those days, we did not have a printer in the tent, just blank bibs and magic markers. Carl decided that he wanted to write the number. Well he may be the greatest long jumper in the history but he wasn't a great number writer. Anyway, he went out and got a qualifying jump.

Two days later, Carl returns for the long jump final. I ask if he has his competitor's number and he says he lost it again. This time I did not let him near the magic marker and wrote the number and did a darn good job if I do say so myself. Carl then went out and placed to make his 4th Olympic team. The next day I pick up a copy of the NY Times, and there is a picture on the front page of Carl Lewis landing in the long jump pit wearing my number. I called up Cora in NJ and tell her to get a copy of the Times and about the picture.

Fast forward ten years and Eddie is old enough that I am reading to him at bedtime. Among his favorite books is the Magic Treehouse series in which a couple of kids are transported in a time machine to famous historical events. There are also companion books with background about the events and places. Anyway, Cora and Eddie see a Magic Treehouse book about the Olympics in the bookstore and buy it and bring it home.

I am reading the book to Eddie and turn to page 108 and there is the same picture of Carl Lewis landing in the long jump pit. I point to the picture and say to Eddie, "See that picture, your daddy wrote that number." Eddie turns to me and says, "Dad, that's really COOL!" It was one of the nicest things he had ever said to me at that point, and after that, he seemed to understand when I had to go off to a track & field meet.

I also want to thank my track & field mentors.

At the national level, there was Pat and Helio Rico, Frank Greenberg, Warren Ring, Larry Ellis, and from the Penn Relays, in addition to Dave Johnson, Bob Glascott, Herman Mancini, and, of course, Jim Tuppeny who was my college coach.

At the local level there was my high school coach Bob Murphy, and also the four gentlemen from New Jersey who served as officials at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, the same year I was certified.

Bill Reid taught me how to be a clerk.

John Courteney taught me how to be a timer

Andy Boyajian taught me how to be a jack of all trades.

And Joe Goodspeed taught me how to be a referee. And I have a final story which involves Joe Goodspeed.

Joe and Mary Goodspeed founded the New Jersey Association. Joe was the first president and he appointed me as the first general council when I was fresh out of law school. At the time, the president of the Metropolitan Association across the river was Tracy Sundlin. Every once in a while, Tracy would cross the river and do sometimes that would enrage Joe. He would call me up and say, "Ed, write a letter, and send it to Helio and Pat Rico, Bob Hersh, and maybe Howard Schmertz." And I would dutifully write a letter pleading with them to get Tracy to stop doing whatever he was doing.

I actually made some friends with those letters. Bob Hersh is at my table tonight. He once joked that I should get those letters published.

About this time, Fred Lebow published his memoir. In it, he admitted that the NYC Marathon was giving hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money to the top runners. Now this was strictly legal - TACTRUST had been created - but never been publicized. And my namesake, the Mayor of NYC, was furious because he had given the NYC Marathon the services of hundreds of policemen and DPW workers for free. He held a press conference and the next day, I see a New York Times headline that says, "Koch tells Lebow that he can take his marathon to Newark, NJ." A little while later, I get a call from Joe Goodspeed. He tells me, "I just left Freddie a message. I told him that if he thinks he had problems with Ed Koch in New York, just wait until he comes to New Jersey and has to deal with Ed Koch over here!"

Again, I thank you for this honor. God bless our sport, and bless all those who serve it.