

PETER D. CLENTZOS
1932 OLYMPIC GAMES
TRACK & FIELD



AN OLYMPIAN'S ORAL HISTORY
INTRODUCTION

Southern California has a long tradition of excellence in sports and leadership in the Olympic Movement. The Amateur Athletic Foundation is itself the legacy of the 1984 Olympic Games. The Foundation is dedicated to expanding the understanding of sport in our communities. As a part of our effort, we have joined with the Southern California Olympians, an organization of over 1,000 women and men who have participated on Olympic teams, to develop an oral history of these distinguished athletes.

Many Olympians who competed in the Games prior to World War II agreed to share their Olympic experiences in their own words. In the pages that follow, you will learn about these athletes, and their experiences in the Games and in life as a result of being a part of the Olympic Family.

The Amateur Athletic Foundation, its Board of Directors, and staff welcome you to use this document to enhance your understanding of sport in our community.

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AN OLYMPIAN'S ORAL HISTORY
METHODOLOGY

Interview subjects include Southern California Olympians who competed prior to World War II. Interviews were conducted between March 1987, and August 1988, and consisted of one to five sessions each. The interviewer conducted the sessions in a conversational style and recorded them on audio cassette, addressing the following major areas:

Family History

Date/place of birth; occupation of father/mother; siblings; family residence;

Education

Primary and secondary schools attended; college and post-collegiate education;

Sport-Specific Biographical Data

Subject's introduction to sport—age, event and setting of first formal competition; coaches/trainers/others who influenced athletic development; chronology of sports achievements; Olympic competition; post-Olympic involvement in sports;

General Biographical Data

Employment history; marital history; children; communities of residence; retirement;

General Observations

Reactions and reflections on Olympic experience; modernization of sport; attitudes on and involvement with the Olympic Movement; advice to youth and aspiring athletes.

Interview transcripts were edited and may include additional material based on subsequent conversations and/or subject's own editing.

PETER D. CLENTZOS

1932 OLYMPIC GAMES - LOS ANGELES
POLE VAULT

INTERVIEWED:

October, 1987
Pasadena, California
by George A. Hodak

PETER D. CLENTZOS

Interviewer: George A. Hodak

Hodak: Before we begin to discuss your early interest in sports, would you tell me a bit about your family background, including when and where you were born?

Clentzos: I was born in Oakland, California, on June 15, 1909. My parents came from Greece, the little island of Kythera, just north of Crete and south of the Peloponnesus. My dad came to this country in the early 1900s and he was a carpenter, a good one. He was a master at his trade and was sought after. He brought my mother over a little later and we lived in San Francisco. I went to elementary school there. Then, gradually, as I became older, San Francisco was a little bit too cold and foggy so we moved to Salinas. My father was hired by the Cominos Brothers, who were very prominent in Salinas at that time. They were six brothers who came over and they got into business and built a restaurant and a hotel. My dad did all the carpentry, the finish work on the grill and on the hotel. So we moved up there. I went to school there for three or four years. My uncle was in San Luis Obispo and he had a little restaurant there. So my dad decided to move to San Luis Obispo and that's where I went to high school.

Hodak: And at what point did you become active in various sports?

Clentzos: I started in elementary school in San Luis Obispo. I think it was in the fourth or fifth grade. I can remember taking a deep interest in the pole vault at that time, also in the hurdles.

Hodak: What would have stimulated an interest in the pole vault?

Clentzos: Well, I saw pictures in the paper and I had gone to some of the meets at Cal-Poly and watched them in their athletic program and I became, more or less, obsessed with the idea of becoming a vaulter. Fortunately, we had a coach at the high school and he used to come down to the elementary school and teach the various fundamentals of track. He did this on his own, because he knew that the kids in the elementary school would in the future be going to high school. He was very smart that way, and I'm very glad he did it.

Hodak: So, by the time you were in high school you were competing in various meets. Was there much competition in the pole vault?

Clentzos: Oh, yes. The track and field program was the big one at San Luis Obispo because we met teams from Paso Robles, Santa Maria, Templeton, Atascadero, and all the little towns around there. And as we went along, we got into the big meets—Santa Barbara and King's City were also on the agenda. And of course, the big meets down at the Coliseum and at L.A. High School were the ones that really counted. They were the CIF [California Interscholastic Federation] meets.

Hodak: And so you competed in statewide meets?

Clentzos: Well, I began to blossom in probably my junior and senior years and I think I had a record of around 11 feet 6 inches in the pole vault in my junior year and then shot up to 12 feet 9 inches in my senior year. At that time, I think I broke every record from King's City down to Santa Barbara. I can remember one meet at Santa Barbara, there was a pole vault mark of 12 feet and one-half inch held by a vaulter named Goodenough, pronounced like good enough. Isn't that something? He later went on to Occidental College and became a big star. But in my senior year I jumped 12 feet 1 inch and

broke his record. As a result of that, I think I caught the eye of Dean Cromwell at USC and some other coaches too. I know Stanford was after me at that time. There was a gentleman in town, S.O. Darling, who ran a clothing store, and he was a graduate of Stanford. It's a funny thing, I don't know how it happened but he signed me up to go to Stanford. I had a scholarship there. I had a job there and I was all set to go. I really wanted to be a Trojan though, because of my heritage. And Stanford started October 1 and USC started September 12, and I was anxious to go to school, so some of the scouts from USC had me visit the campus and it was then that I decided to go to USC.

Hodak: And Dean Cromwell approached you?

Clentzos: Not himself, but there were other scouts like Tommy Davis and Sam Yocum who were two individuals who were very prominent. They were coaches down there and they did a lot of recruiting for USC.

Hodak: And similar arrangements were made for you as Stanford had, in the way of a scholarship and a job?

Clentzos: Yes, I had a job on the field down there, cleaning up the field.

I think it was in my junior year that I went down to the CIF meet at the Coliseum and I got second place in that meet. I can remember beating out [George] Jefferson of Inglewood, who later got third in the pole vault in the Olympic Games in 1932. Of course. Bill Miller was also in that meet and he got first place in the Southern Cal meet. Then we went up to the state meet which was in Modesto, I believe, that year, 1927, and I got a third place there. The following year, in 1928, I got second in the CIF meet in Southern California, which qualified me for the state. Then we went to Selma in the San Joaquin Valley, where the state meet was, and I took another third

place. So my best marks in high school were third place in the state meet for two years and a second place in the Southern Cal meet, which was a very good accomplishment, I think, especially for a guy who wasn't built to be a pole vaulter.

Hodak: Now why do you say that? What is the optimum build for a pole vaulter?

Clentzos: The optimum build is a tall, lithe individual, maybe about six feet tall with a lot of speed. Most vaulters were about six feet and over and they were well built with a lot of agility. I was 5 foot 7 and was built like a shot putter. Everytime I came out there with a pole, they probably thought I was carrying the pole for somebody else and that I was going to the shot put ring.

Hodak: What sort of things would you do to improve your pole vaulting? What kind of regimen did you follow?

Clentzos: I was a firm believer in weight training, even at that time. I didn't go into it explosively, but I became an expert in weight training, as we'll find out later on. I did a lot of exercises which I thought would improve me, but I think the fact that I was so dedicated and so intense on the training, that made me better. I think anybody who trains diligently and is dedicated will become a lot better.

Hodak: In the time that you competed, the pole vault was done with a bamboo pole.

Clentzos: Yeah, with a bamboo pole. Not only that, but the dirt pits, even in college, were used at that time. We had a pit that was full of sawdust, which was way ahead of some of the area schools. I know back east they had cinder and black dirt and sand in the pits, and we were further advanced than them. Even at USC they had sawdust, they had progressed that far.

Hodak: And what of the poles used?

Clentzos: I always looked for a pole that had some spring to it. I guess I was kind of ahead of my time and was probably thinking of the fiberglass. But you couldn't bend the bamboo pole, because if you did it busted. I had several bust on me but fortunately my momentum was so great that I missed the pole and landed in the pit. But they snapped just like a fiberglass would snap today.

Hodak: When you were competing during this period were you aware of Olympic competition, in particular. Lee Barnes?

Clentzos: Oh, yeah. I was following USC with an Olympic champion in 1924. Yeah, Barnes was an Olympic champion in 1924, and in 1928 in Amsterdam he got a little bit lower, wasn't up to par. But I wrote him a letter when I was a senior and I asked him for some advice and he said, "Eat what you're used to eating but not too much." And he said, "Practice diligently and do all the activities that you think will make you a great vaulter." So I was quite inspired by that.

Hodak: Once you entered USC, who were some of your fellow athletes on the track team that you competed alongside? Obviously USC had a particularly strong track team at this time.

Clentzos: I can remember some great vaulters we had. We had Bill Hubbard and Dick Livingston. And we had Hal Mitchell. Jack Williams was the greatest, he was from Inglewood. He was one of the top vaulters in the country at that time. He was jumping around 13 feet 6 inches.

Hodak: Bill Graber . . .

Clentzos: Well, Bill Graber came along later. When I was a junior, he was a sophomore. He became a world champion, of course, in

1932, and broke the world's record of 14 feet 4 and three-eighths inches in Palo Alto. But he had a bad day in the Olympics and he got fourth.

Coming to USC was a big thrill for me because I always wanted to go to USC and become a Trojan. As a freshman, we had a full schedule of competition. Some of the great rivals I had were George Jefferson of UCLA, who was going to Compton [Junior College] at that time. Then there was Burt DeCroot up at Stanford, and George Poole, who was my high school rival. He and I used to compete and we tied practically every meet. Nobody had the real edge. Then there were other great vaulters all over the place, like [William] Miller, who went to Stanford and Ned Johns. That was before the other great vaulters came along like Earle Meadows and Bill Sefton and so on.

Hodak: Tell me about your coach at USC.

Clentzos: Dean Cromwell was the master psychologist of them all. He was the greatest coach that ever lived because he taught you to believe in yourself and have confidence in yourself. He was the kind of a guy that always praised you. That was his chief tool of instruction. He was very crafty in the way he approached people. He'd be standing around and you'd come walking up to the group that he was with and he'd say, "Well, here comes the champ." And of course you swelled up whenever you heard that. Everybody was a champ to him. He'd said, "Hi, champ, how you doing?" And the funny thing about it was that everybody that he knew loved him because he felt that he had a personal interest in him. He was always interested in you breaking your record, your personal record, at any meet that you were in. Whenever he gave a speech at a large gathering or clinic of any kind, everybody in that audience felt that Cromwell had a real interest in him and that he was speaking to them individually in the audience. And

that's the way he felt. That was his way of coaching.

When we went back to the ICAAAA [Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America] meets he would tell us, "Well, there's three hours difference back there and we have to get accustomed to it." But in those days, we traveled by train. It wasn't like getting on a plane and getting there three or four hours later. On a train, it took you three or four days. I remember my first ICAAAA trip was in 1930 going back to the Harvard Stadium. We had three vaulters: Livingston, Hubbard and myself. We went on the train, stopped off in Arizona and worked out, and we stopped off in Kansas someplace and worked out. This was in the spring time around May 30, and we were going back to Harvard Stadium in Cambridge. It was the most beautiful time of the year. The train went through canyons with babbling brooks and all this kind of thing. And we went clear up to Montreal, Canada, and trained at McGill University. So we got to see Canada. On the way back we stopped at Niagara Falls. This was the kind of thing Dean planned for us. Then we came down the Hudson River and then stopped off at Cambridge, Boston, Massachusetts, and had our ICAAAA meet. We were stunned because when we were working out there was this black dirt in the pit and the high jump had sand. Of course, the long jump didn't matter because they had sand anyway. But, here we were jumping, I think there was about 25 or 30 of us vaulters and in the end a fellow named [Oscar] Sutermeister won it at 13 feet six, and six of us tied for second at 13 feet 3. So we made a lot of points there. USC won the meet.

Then we went to Stagg Field in Chicago for the NCAA meet. That time I tied for fifth. But we got there kind of late and the bar was already up to 12 feet 6 inches and that was within the range of my top height. Anyway, I made my opening height and tied for fifth place. USC won that meet too because we had big stars like Frank Wykoff, who won the sprints, and

Ernie Paine in the hurdles. We had Vic Williams in the quarter-mile and Halstead in the mile run. And we had Bob Hall, the big shot putter, who won the discus and the shot; Jimmy Stewart in the high jump; [Robert] Van Osdel and [Duncan] McNaughton, who were later Olympic heroes; and so on down the line. We had a great team.

Hodak: Ken Carpenter . . .

Clentzos: Ken Carpenter was another terrific athlete in the discus throw.

Hodak: Obviously Cromwell had no trouble securing top athletes.

Clentzos: Oh no, we had the greatest athletes in the world at that time. They wanted to come to USC. So we were lucky to have a big, strong team.

Hodak: Was there much talk of the Olympics on the part of Cromwell and others, given that USC already had a bit of Olympic tradition?

Clentzos: Well, our class was called the Olympic class, the class of 1932. So, we graduated in June and many of us just went right into the Olympics.

At USC we had some real tight meets. We had a meet up at Stanford. I remember [Robert L.] "Dink" Templeton, who was the great rival coach of Cromwell. He was a good coach too. He produced great champions in the shot put like [Harlow] Rothert and [Eric] Krenz. And he had Hector Dyer in the sprints; he had a tremendous group of athletes up there. But this one meet, I can remember it, everybody was talking about it. Maxwell Stiles was writing it up and George Davis and Braven Dyer, the great sportswriters of the era. We went up to Stanford and I wasn't supposed to place in it, and Bill Graber was supposed to win it. And they had another vaulter

up there, I believe it was Bill Miller, who was scheduled to take first or second. Anyway, it happened that my vault was to decide the meet. I think I missed it twice and if I made 13 feet I would tie for second. That would give us Graber with his five points and two points for second place, that would make seven points, which we figured. So, I ran down on my third attempt and there were 20,000 people up in the stands, mostly Stanford rooters, and they started giving me the "boo." And when I went up in the air my pole broke. I landed in the pit and they gave me guffaws all over the place and thought they had it made. I had an extra pole that I had brought along for a spare and I ran down and I got over it. It was a miracle that I got over it after breaking the pole. My teammates came up and grabbed me. It was a big thrill, I'll tell you. It was something I'll never forget. One of the highlights of my old career was winning that meet.

Hodak: How did Templeton and Cromwell interact? Were they friendly rivals?

Clentzos: Oh yeah. They always argued about something.

Hodak: I get that sense that there were arguments from time to time.

Clentzos: Yes, Dink Templeton came out one time with wooden blocks on the starting line, which were about maybe six inches high and Hec Dyer would put his hands up on those and start from those. So Dean said, "That's illegal." And they had a big media fight over that. So that was kind of a thrilling thing that shook up people all over the place.

Hodak: So you mentioned that you were part of what you would call the "Olympic class," the class of '32.

Clentzos: Yeah, the class of '32 was the Olympic class. And they had tryouts at Occidental College where I came in fourth.

Hodak: You're talking of the West Coast regional tryouts?

Clentzos: Yeah, the West Coast regional tryouts, from which the first three were to go to Palo Alto. Well, I didn't make it to Palo Alto, I just missed by one place. I had kind of resigned myself to maybe just train along with them and see what happens. Most of the athletes were staying at USC anyway. This was in June and I got a call one day from a Greek lawyer in L.A. and he said, "How would you like to compete on the Greek team, for Greece?" even though I was a USC graduate, born in California and so on. I said, "How can that be arranged? I am a U.S. citizen." And he says, "Well, your parents were born in Greece and if you went to Greece they could nab you for military duty." I said, "Oh yeah?" And he said, "On that basis, you have a dual citizenship and you can compete for Greece and be with the Greek team." And I said, "That sounds great. I'll do it."

Well, anyway, at USC we had several other athletes competing for other nations. One of them was from Austria and competed in the 100 meters. We had Simon Toribio of the Philippines who competed in the high jump. There was Duncan McNaughton who competed in the high jump for Canada. So we had a great number of athletes who competed in the Games because they were from other countries and they had the privilege of doing it. So I didn't feel so bad about it. I felt pretty good.

I got to live in the Village and I had all the thrills and the benefits of being in the Olympic Village and that was quite an experience, living with all those different athletes. They had their own cooks. They had their own areas. It was up in Baldwin Hills at that time. It was an area where they had built all these bungalows—fabricated buildings, prefabs they called them. My own room was No. 1215 and I still have the key to it, which is a very precious memento to me. So we stayed in the Village and the police motorcycle escorts would take us

down to the training fields at Manual Arts High School or the Coliseum or wherever we wanted to train.

That was the beginning of a tremendous experience. The Olympic Games is really something that doesn't happen every day, to get an opportunity to compete in the Games. I can still remember walking in the Coliseum in the parade on the opening day. They had an opening day and we had been fitted with white trousers and blue jackets with white tie and white shoes. Of course, Greece led the parade into the Coliseum. When we came through those big gates there were 100,000 people in there and they let out a roar. I was quite proud of my Hellenic background and the forefathers who gave birth to the Games in 776 B.C. It was a dream come true. I was idealistic and a dedicated athlete. I didn't smoke, I didn't drink, didn't take any drugs or steroids. I was a straight arrow. I took care of my body. So when I walked in with the procession, receiving the plaudits of the crowd, I felt that many thousands before me had done this and what a wonderful moment it was. It was too deep to comprehend at the moment. Then the trumpets blared and the torch runner came in as we were standing there, after all the nations were in line. Then the loudspeaker said, "These Games are open!" and they began. It was the beginning of a tremendous experience.

Hodak: At the time, how did you see what have come to be called the Olympic ideals? Aside from maximizing your own athletic potential, were there other things that you thought of in connection with the Olympics?

Clentzos: Well, you know the ancient Greek philosophers believed—this is the thing that struck me about the whole thing—that physical beauty, strength and health were not the only attributes men and women should have but when you combine these with the moral, spiritual virtues, which are promoted through exercise and contests, that they can create a perfect man, a well-

balanced being in his element and activities. Of course, the Greeks had a philosophy: "A sound mind and a sound body." This is the ideal that I believed in. This is the ideal that Baron de Coubertin was convinced was the same philosophy that could bring people together from all over the world and stop all the immoral types of things that were going on; the cheating and the political bickering and all this kind of stuff. The Olympics is an answer to all of these things and what is really fine in life. This is the way it should be. I think that every athlete that ever takes part in any Olympics believes that when they go into it, meeting the athletes of the world. I think when you have that kind of a feeling, the Olympics will never die.

Hodak: Was there a camaraderie that accorded with these principles in the Olympic Village?

Clentzos: In the Olympic Village you could see it everywhere because in those days there weren't too many nations involved with the Olympic Movement. But de Coubertin was trying to bring it back and I think he did a good job in it. All the nations that were there in the Olympic Village in '32 in Baldwin Hills in Los Angeles, had something in common. We respected one another. When we met we said hello without any retreat. We just believed in each other.

Hodak: And what of your event, the pole vault?

Clentzos: In the pole vault, I think my downfall. . . I didn't do as well. I was jumping over 13 feet 3 inches pretty regularly so I was very much disappointed in my performance and I don't know what happened. Even Bill Graber had his moment. He was the world's champion and he came in fourth. I made the opening height of 12 feet three and missed the next time which was 12 feet 9, which I should have made very easily.

Hodak: Were there any factors that affected your vault?

Clentzos: Yeah, I have been thinking about it all these years. There wasn't any wind factor. My timing was off. I was clearing the bar and landing on top of it. It was probably competitive nervousness that I should not have had. But when you're in front of thousands of people in the Olympic Games nervousness is a natural thing. But you should be able to get over it.

Hodak: And you say your timing was off, would that involve your approach and planting the pole?

Clentzos: One thing stands out in my mind about my training and it was this: Right next to us were the Japanese and they believed in steam baths. Every day they would go into their steam baths and take a steam bath and I said, "That sounds pretty good." So, for about five or six days there I went in after my training and took a steam bath. I felt like a million dollars. I went down there and I just felt that I could really do something that day. I had figured on about fourth place anyway. So, when I cleared the first height, I was over a couple of feet, there wasn't any problem there. Then my second one, after I cleared the first one, that's when the problem came; whether I had my standards too far in or too far out, I don't know. But I was clearing the bar, wasn't having any trouble with height, but it was coming down on top of it that disturbed me.

Hodak: And what are your thoughts with the steam bath?

Clentzos: Well, I thought that may have had something to do with my timing. Muscles, muscular, something I wasn't accustomed to.

Hodak: It may have relaxed your muscles too much.

Clentzos: Maybe so, I don't know. But that's not the real reason. The real reason, of course, is me not making the height.

Hodak: Well, it didn't hurt the one Japanese pole vaulter, do you recall?

Clentzos: Well, he got second. [Shuhei] Nishida was his name.

Hodak: It was one of the closer events.

Clentzos: It was a close event until about the last jump when Bill Miller beat him out. Then Jefferson got third and Graber got fourth, and another Japanese athlete got fifth. Then the one that beat me out for the next place was from Brazil.

Hodak: So you finished seventh?

Clentzos: Yeah, I finished in seventh place. The point is, just like de Coubertin said, "It isn't the placing, it is the participation." And, that is what I am so proud of. I'm thinking positively now. What did I get out of the Olympics? I participated. I was an Olympian and nobody can ever take that away from you or downgrade you. I can name a lot of people who went to the Olympics and never placed at all, or at subsequent meets after they've won it they got seventh or eighth place. It's not uncommon at all. Many don't even place at all. I think placing is fine, but if you don't place it's not the end of the earth.

Hodak: Were you able to attend other events during this period or were you completely preoccupied with your training in preparation for the pole vault?

Clentzos: Well, the Greek community at that time had a number of activities scheduled and they were terrific. They were hospitable people and I remember one affair that we had out on the Sunset Strip. Jim Londos, the world's champion heavyweight wrestler, was with the Creek team and I remember he said to me, "Well, too bad, Pete, you couldn't have done better." (laughter) I know how he felt because I felt the

same way. I wanted to do better, believe me, but sometimes things happen. Look at Mary Decker Slaney, she wanted to do better too in the 1984 Olympics. She fell and didn't even place, didn't even finish. She's a great world-class, runner. But she has another chance. You have to look at it from a positive viewpoint. The Olympic Movement is greater than you are and something that everybody should be idealistic with.

Hodak: Were you able to see other events?

Clentzos: Yeah, I went to other events. We had a special section in the Coliseum and I was there every day watching my teammates and watching the rest of the events. There were some great events at that time.

Hodak: Which ones stand out?

Clentzos: The sprints, of course, are great. The marathon to me was probably the greatest. There was a little Argentine named [Juan Carlos] Zabala, and I don't see that written up too much, but it was the greatest exhibition I have ever seen of stamina and courage. I remember Greta Anderson came in the Coliseum wobbling and almost didn't make it in the 1984 Olympics. She came in and wobbled around the track and everybody was trying to touch her. In 1932, Zabala came in and he was staggering. He was coming toward the finish line and there were 100,000 people in the stadium. This was the last day, the closing event. Zabala was coming around that track and he was 200 yards from the finish and he was staggering and he fell. He got up and he ran and he staggered and he fell again, and about ten feet from the finish line he fell down. Scores of officials were ready to put their hands on him and the announcer said, "Don't touch him or you'll disqualify him." And so everybody was trying to push him across the line. The crowd was roaring, 100,000 people roaring. He was inching toward the line, getting closer and closer, and he was

practically on his hands and knees to cross the line. In the meantime, there were Japanese runners coming up behind him ready to take him on and he would have lost the race. In another five or six seconds he would have lost it. But he scrambled across the finish line and that's when the officials got their hands on him and took him away and tried to revive him. That, to me, was the greatest moment in all the Olympics.

Hodak: That recalls the 1908 marathon, with Dorando, the Italian. You have probably seen pictures of—

Clentzos: Yeah, that was the same type of thing. Well, that was spectacular. I am surprised they didn't write it up though in the books. But that was a tremendous finish.

The Lehtinen-Hill affair was another one, with [Ralph] Hill of the U.S. and [Lauri] Lehtinen of Finland, I believe. Lehtinen cut in front of him and Bill Henry yelled out, "Remember, these people are our guests." The crowd reacted and started booing. Hill lost the race on account of it. He just couldn't pass him because this guy kept thwarting him and frustrating him by being in front of him.

Hodak: And one of the side stories to that is the sportsmanship that followed afterwards between those two runners. It didn't result in a big dispute.

Clentzos: No. And there were great runners like Bill Carr from Pennsylvania, who beat out Ben Eastman in the 100 meters when Ben Eastman was supposed to be the greatest 400-meter runner in the world. But he got beat by Carr. Carr was a tremendous runner.

Hodak: Did you see any women's events?

Clentzos: Well, I saw [Mildred] Babe Didrikson and Evelyne Hall. They were very prominent in the 80-meter hurdles. It was a controversial event which Evelyne believes she won. She's a great athlete and a great competitor.

Hodak: It looks to be a photo finish in the pictures. But they didn't have the equipment then . . .

Clentzos: One thing about the IAAF committee, they don't want to hurt the feelings of anybody. Like the Mary Decker deal in 1984; they didn't make a decision on that, whose fault it really was. Later on, Zola Budd came out and said it was her fault and Mary Decker had said that all along, but the IAAF committee . . . I was the deputy manager of officials for the '84 Olympics and our officials said that Zola Budd was the one that fouled and they called it on her. In fact, they put it on a piece of paper but the committee threw it out after watching film. But they didn't want to hurt any feelings. These officials were right down on the field and they were right next to it. Then the IAAF superseded the call.

Hodak: Back to the Olympics. Tell me about the 1932 Greek Olympic team.

Clentzos: Well, we had sprinters that didn't do too well. We had one quarter-miler in the hurdles, Angelo Miropolous, who did pretty well. Christos Mandikas was another one. He was a blond lover that came over with the team and he attracted all the women. He was a real handsome guy and I think he won one of his heats in the hurdles. Then our wrestlers didn't do too bad, some of them placed but I don't think they placed in the finals. But we had about 12 to 13 athletes, some of them came out pretty well and others were just average, but they tried hard.

The coach was Otto Szymiczek, who is one of the greatest

athletic leaders right now in Greece. In fact, he was the coach at that time. He was a Hungarian. He came from Hungary to Greece, hired by the government there. He married a Greek girl and had two fine sons. One was a great skier and one was a great artist. He had been coaching the Greek team there for many years. He is now the head of the International Olympic Academy, in Olympia, Greece. He's the one who promotes these Olympism movements. He travels from country to country and there is no greater authority in the world than Otto Szymiczek.

Anyway, Otto has been the chief adviser and consultant for anything of any great importance in track and field. He established a museum in Olympia for track and field, with all the years emanating from 1896 clear up to the present time. There's a separate little room for each Olympiad. He handled the European Games for the last two or three times, that were held in Athens. In fact, he will be the chief consultant at the 1996 Games that will be held in Athens. There is a committee promoting to get the Games in 1996, the 100th anniversary. And, personally I think the Games should be held there permanently. I think if each nation supported a building or a sport of some kind—financed it—the financial situation could take care of itself. Some people think that the athletes miss out by traveling from one country to the other. But they do that anyway.

In Athens, of course, the birthplace of the Games, they have the ideal setting there. It wouldn't be in Olympia, it would be in Athens because they have several stadiums there that could fill the bill. They have dormitories and they could build the buildings that need to be built to accommodate the various venues for the other sports.

Hodak: Yes, it is an idea that others have brought out too. Tell me what you did beyond graduation at USC. You graduated in 1932, correct?

Clentzos: Yes. When I finished college I wanted to go on and get my graduate degree, what they call a secondary, in school administration. And you had to go two more years doing graduate work in order to attain it.

Hodak: And as an undergrad, what had you studied?

Clentzos: I studied education and had minors in biological and social sciences. Of course, I had my thesis in mind too, a little later on. I was working on it. My thesis was on the psychological hazards of football, which I completed in 1947. But the real drive that I had was that I wanted to continue on with my graduate work and at that time I was recommended for a job in physical education at the dental college, which was on the campus. They wanted somebody to handle the physical training program for the dental students. There were about 20 dental hygienists and the student body of all the promising students that were to become dentists. There was a gentleman there. Dr. Ford, and he and I got along very well and he liked my style of approach. So I ran the program for two years. In the meantime, I still was out for football and helping Howard Jones as an assistant, without pay or anything. I was a volunteer, because I was learning the football system at USC to be prepared to coach it when I went into high school coaching a little later on.

Hodak: Did you ever have thoughts of competing in football?

Clentzos: Yes, I did. I played high school football. I got my letter in high school, three years of it. Then I came to USC and I was on the freshman team and was a specialist in drop-kicking. I used to kick 30, 40, 50 yards, just the drop-kick. "Well, you got a talent there," the coaches would say, "sorry we can't use it." (laughter) But I had fun with it anyway.

I still went out for varsity football but, of course, track was

my main specialty and the coaches made sure that I was leaning toward track and not too much football. I became a Spartan. I was on the Spartan squad and I went through some pretty heavy nights out there. Of course, the Spartans were a group of players that could have made any college football team in the country, they were tremendous athletes. The squad would only carry so many and the rest of them were cut and put in the Spartan squad, like the redshirt deal you see today.

So, Cliff Herd was the coach and he was a terrific guy. You could hear him screaming down on Seventh and Broadway when he got loose. The scouts would bring back the plays of the opposing teams. Say we played Washington State one weekend and Oregon the next, and Cal or Stanford; they came back with all the plays and they prepared them in the form of a book. We would take these plays and the Spartans would come in a huddle against the varsity. And then we would run the same plays these schools would run, and USC would defense against it. We did this every night, every day of the week to prepare USC for the games coming up. I did this through my sophomore, junior and senior years. Then when I became a graduate student I got to assist Cliff Herd and Aubrey Devine, who was another coach at that time, in running these plays against the varsity. So I took the books home and copied the plays down; which I later used effectively in high school football. I had some good teams at Barstow High School and Roosevelt High, which I coached later on. But, it was a great experience being out there. A little later on I pushed for a schedule for the Spartans so they would play a preliminary game with the varsity, maybe at the Coliseum or somewhere, so in addition to their working out the Spartans had something to look forward to. It came out to be a pretty good deal because a lot of the players that would have been dull and bored out there had something to look forward to now because they had a schedule going. The Spartan experience is something I'll never forget.

Hodak: Let's talk a bit about Howard Jones. What were his strengths as a coach?

Clentzos: I liked Howard Jones. He was my kind of a coach. He was tough and stern and he didn't believe in any horseplay. I used to write down all the mannerisms and all the things he used to say, the quotes, especially the games with Notre Dame. He never swore. I think the only swear word I heard him say was "gol darn" and things like that. He was a real man. He was a tough guy and a good disciplinarian. He would mimic some player that looked bad in a game. Like one night I remember, Ernie Smith, the great All-American tackle, and Howard Jones said, "Smith, you look like this." And Jones sprawled on the ground in a prone position and held his arms out and said, "This is how you look. Smith." From then on, Smith became an All-American. That really got to him. Jones did a lot of things like that that motivated the players to become champions. Dean Cromwell used to be out there helping him. Jones was a great coach.

Hodak: Was he noted for any particular innovations or offensive schemes and formations?

Clentzos: Yes, Jones had what they called a "spaghetti shift." I guess he was trying to cross up [Knut]e Rockne with his Rockne shift, because I remember the players would come out of the huddle and line up in three lines and three rows. Then they would shift to the left, one, two, three, and shift to the right, and then they would go into their formation. You didn't know whether it was going to be a single-wing, a short punt, an unbalanced right or unbalanced left, or a punt formation. Whatever it was going to be, you didn't know until the last shift. So they called that the "spaghetti shift." I even used that in my coaching later on in Barstow, California. He was very innovative that way. He had terrific ideas about coaching.

Hodak: You mentioned Knute Rockne. Is there any particular USC-Notre Dame game that stands out?

Clentzos: Of course the greatest game was when USC went back there in 1930 and Notre Dame was favored and Johnny Baker beat them with a field goal. I think it stunned everybody. It shook them up more than an earthquake. People were all listening to the game by radio and they came running out of their houses, they came out on the campus, "We won, we won. Johnny Baker kicked a field goal." It was 16-11. And boy, what a reception they got when they came back on the train! That was a tremendous game. Of course, later on, Rockne—he pulled a lot of good ones, too—they came to the Coliseum and he was weeping and moaning that he didn't have anybody and ended up beating the Trojans at the Coliseum in the biggest upset, 31-0 or something like that. So Rockne was a master of psychology.

Hodak: Any other teams push USC in this period, aside from Notre Dame?

Clentzos: Well, [Glenn] "Pop" Warner, up at Stanford, was one of his greatest rivals. Pop Warner used to use the double- and single-reverses. He was terrific at that. But Jones had him covered by smashing in the tackles and ends where the reverses would come and he frustrated Pop Warner pretty well that way. Then, of course, Washington State was always tough. I can remember when we went up to Washington State and got beat up there. Oregon State beat us up there in a big upset, too. Of course, the biggest rivals were Stanford and Cal and UCLA, let's not leave them out. In the early days, UCLA was no contest. I remember we beat them 51-0, 76-0. They had some great teams later on though.

Hodak: That's an interesting digression on USC football. Now, during this time you were also competing as a wrestler, I believe.

following the Olympics.

Clentzos: I always wanted to wrestle. We never had wrestling or boxing at USC because the University didn't believe in it. I think they would have condoned wrestling, but boxing was entirely out. So I joined the Los Angeles Athletic Club and I used to go down there three times a week religiously for about four or five years. I was competing as a light heavyweight, 175 pounder. I had a good coach up there named Bert Jones and we had some terrific matches. One year, when we had a big AAU meet out at Inglewood, I got third in the nationals in the 175-pound division. I got third another year and those were my crowning achievements. I enjoyed wrestling and I coached it in high school and later on in the service when I was at Williams Field in Arizona and at Santa Ana Army Base, when we were training cadets. I became proficient in judo also at that time.

Hodak: This was during the same period?

Clentzos: This was later on in 1941 when the war broke out. I had occasion to call back my talents in wrestling during the service, 1941-46.

Hodak: Did you have further Olympic aspirations following '32? Were you looking towards—?

Clentzos: I was still competing in meets. We had relay meets at Long Beach. We had the West Coast relays at the Coliseum, the Coliseum Relays they called them. I was getting a group of former USC athletes together, we could call ourselves the all-stars or something and compete.

Hodak: Were you competing unattached?

Clentzos: Yes, unattached at that time. The Los Angeles Athletic Club

had a team at that time too. The clubs weren't so pronounced as they are today, with all the Southern California areas and national organizations. But the L.A. Athletic Club was the chief one at that time.

In about 1935, there was an organization in New York City called the Hermes Athletic Club. They wanted to sponsor a team going to Europe, going to Athens to compete in Athens. We had a fellow named Peter Stathis out here who ran the Belmont Seafood Grotto, a very successful businessman. He asked me if I wanted to go to Greece and compete with four other athletes. One of them was George Theodoratus of Washington State University, who was formerly from Sacramento High School. George, at that time, was an All-American football player. He was Hercules himself. He was about 6 foot 4 and he weighed about 270 pounds. He was a huge individual. He was a shot putter and a discus thrower and he was within six inches of the world's record at that time. I think Herman Brix held it at 53 feet 6 inches and George was putting it about 53 feet. Then there was John Fatseas, of New York University, who placed fifth in the hurdles in the NCAA meet, a very fine hurdler and a good athlete. He was well built and took care of himself. Then there was Tony Serrakos, of the University of Michigan, who competed in the 440-yard dash. We had another athlete, Ted Ellison, I think he went to high school in New York City. He was a great athlete at that time. He was a sprinter who later went on to Palo Alto. He ran the 100 in about 9.6.

With these great athletes we went to Greece in 1935. First we stopped off at the Manhattan Opera House where about 3,000 people gave us a terrific send-off. Then we took this ship, a tub called the *Byron*. I think it was about 11,000 tons. We got on this thing and it took us two weeks to get to Greece. There was a lot of fanfare. There was a paper in Chicago that was helping to finance the trip and they sent a reporter along

to cover the meet and send back information to the paper, which he did. We stopped at the Azores Islands, then we stopped in Lisbon, Portugal, on the way. Finally, we got to the Mediterranean and we started getting excited. We started going around the southern cape there. Cape Malaya, which was a very dangerous spot for ships to go through at that time in southern Greece. But we made it through there. We passed by this little island of Kythera, where my parents were born and raised, and then up toward Athens. We got to Athens around July (we left here in the latter part of June). But when we got to Piraeus, I can't describe what I saw. It was so unexpected and so huge. It's like going into San Pedro Harbor if the docks were all filled with people, and they were hanging on the walls and the chimneys and any available space was taken up. Horns blaring for these five Americans of Greek descent who were coming into Athens. The people had been preparing for this for months.

Hodak: And you were completely surprised?

Clentzos: We were surprised. We didn't know anything about it. We knew that we were going to Athens and it was a big thrill for us to go there. So when we got into the harbor, a little tugboat came up and there were photographers with their cameras and reporters who interviewed us and took our pictures. They rushed back to Athens and the boat docked at Piraeus. There's a subway going from Athens to Piraeus, believe it or not, about 12 miles. So we got on that and all the way in there were people lining the subway area. Then when we got to Athens, that was unbelievable. When the train pulled in, hundreds of thousands of people were at the station. There was University Avenue, as they named it, and Venizelos Avenue leading up to the university, where we were going to have our reception. Some of us got lost in the crowd and they finally spotted us and dragged us back in and carried us on their shoulders for about a half-mile up to this place. The

reception was just stupendous. It was just something you couldn't believe unless you saw it.

So then when we arrived there we got this reception and we settled down into the Acropole Hotel. And believe me, when we got up in the morning and saw the Acropolis, that was the crowning achievement of them all. The Acropolis was all lit up. So it wasn't long until we went up there and visited. We began to train in Athens in the old ancient stadium where the Olympics were held in 1896. The dormitories were still there like they were in 1896. The field was cinders and they were using a dirt pit like they did at Harvard Stadium that I was quite disappointed with. It wasn't long that I induced them to put sawdust in the pit, which they did, and that was a new era for Europe because they all began using sawdust from that time on.

The record at that time in the pole vault in Greece was something like 11 feet 9, so it wasn't long before I began breaking records in the stadium. The first meet we had was a meet with Czechoslovakia. I think we had about 50,000 people there for that one in the old stadium. Then we had a meet with other countries that came through. I think the first year I was there we took a tour with the Greek team. Greece had some great athletes at that time. They had a good 800-meter man, named E. Depastas, and they had a tremendous discus thrower named N. Syllas who held the European record at one time. They had some other great athletes too. We went on a trip up to Salonica so the people of the nation could see us—the Greek-Americans from the United States. Then we went to a little place called Serras, near Alexandria, that's right below the Yugoslavian border in Macedonia. So I set a couple of records on the way up there—close to 12 feet 9 and 13 feet. I didn't do 13 feet until later. But that same year, I think probably one of my biggest thrills was going over to Istanbul, Turkey. Something really stands out there because

on the way to Turkey—you know they are fierce rivals, the Greeks and the Turks—as we were going on the boat, we stopped in a place historically known as Smyrna, which they call Izmir now. All of the Greek athletes began to cry because their parents were massacred by the Turks at that time—a very tragic thing. But we stopped off at Smyrna and toured around and then we went on to Turkey.

We got to Istanbul and we were well-received. The people of Turkey put us in a nice hotel. We met the athletes from different countries: Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, Turkey, of course, and two or three other nations were there. One of the first things I did when I got there . . . I forgot my poles. I had left them on the ship and the ship had continued on to the Black Sea. It wasn't until a week later that I got my poles back. So I had to use substitute poles. Well, I did and some of the other nations, especially Bulgaria, didn't look too favorably upon my competing in the meet. They thought I was a ringer. They thought I was from the United States and shouldn't have been competing. John Fatseas was another one competing.

Hodak: And how did they demonstrate these sentiments? How did that come out?

Clentzos: Well, it was a funny way of doing it. I had won the event at 12 feet 6 inches or something like that and I wanted to go on and continue my vaulting. They said, "No, you can't do that, you have to wait until the rest of us finish." We argued about that for a couple of hours. They won so they finished their vaulting and I went on. I didn't break the record but I won the event, which was a big victory because my chief rival was a Bulgarian vaulter called Docef. They had built this up to a big proportion, so I was quite happy to get out of there with a win.

So we came back to Athens and I competed in a couple of other meets and it was then that I broke the national record. You know, they talk about being the first man over a certain height. Well, I was the first man in Greece to go over 13 feet. I went about 13 feet one and a half inches, or four meters. And ironically it was in 1970 that Chris Papanicolaou was the first man to go over 18 feet. However, he broke the world's record at that time, in August 1970. This was right after I had taken a group of about 20 athletes from America over to Greece to compete in 1970.

Anyway, coming back from Constantinople, I competed in this meet in the stadium and I set this record. I was quite pleased with it because it stood for about 22 years until George Roubanis came along in 1956, when he competed for Greece and got third in the Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. He was a good vaulter. He came over to the United States and went to Occidental, and then he went to UCLA and competed over there.

I want to mention one incident that happened in 1935. It was a funny thing: We were vaulting against Czechoslovakia and I had cleared the bar—I believe it was about 12 feet 9 inches—and the attendant who was grabbing the pole pushed it into the bar and knocked it off. They put the bar up and the crowd began to get on this guy. So I went down and cleared the bar again, and he did the same thing. The crowd was ready to come down and lynch him. He was the pole tender, the guy grabbing the pole. He didn't know what he was doing, I guess, and in his exuberance to grab the pole he pushed it into the crossbar. They started whistling at him and booing him and they were going to come down on the track and do something violent. I had to go to the microphone and say something in Greek like, "He didn't mean to do what he did. This time I'll clear it and he won't handle the pole at all, let somebody else throw it back." So I went down and cleared it and they gave a big ovation, and this guy got off the hook.

Well, it was in 1957 that I came back with a team of six Americans of Greek descent, sponsored by the American Hellenic Education Progressive Association. At that time we were standing on the corner, my wife Helen and my son Peter, waiting for a signal and some guy came up and said, "Are you Mr. Clentzos?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "Oh, back in 1935 when I was catching the pole, you saved my life. They were going to come down and lynch me." He was the same guy that was the pole tender.

In November of 1935 I was getting ready to go, but I wanted to go back to the island where my parents were born because my relatives were expecting me. I took a bus and went up to Delphi and saw all the sights. Then when I got down to Delphi, I went to the little town of Itea and took a boat across the sea there and landed in Patras. When I was in route to Itea from Delphi, I went to a little town and I was looking over the town and somebody spotted me and wanted me to come home to dinner with him. I went to dinner with him and his family and sat down and had a nice Greek dinner, which I cherished. Everybody in the little village came around. They had seen my pictures in the paper and knew all about the record I had broken. They have about ten sports journals back there. The Greeks are prolific readers.

So then I went down to Olympia, Greece, and that was one of the highlights. I always wanted to go to Olympia. So I went to Olympia and walked around through the ruins and took pictures of the starting blocks that they had carved in granite. It was there that I really felt a sense of Olympism and the idealistic features of what Olympism is. The serenity of the place I pictured the athletes being anointed by oil and pictured their counseling. I pictured their aspirations and all the spectators that came there and thought about how they stopped wars in order to let the spectators come through with a truce; which I think should be emulated today. When the

Olympic Games are on, everyone should stop all the warring, all the politics. Everybody should pitch in and revive the Olympism ideals that Baron de Coubertin and our ancient forefathers wanted to.

So I spent time in Olympia and I took a train and went over the mountains to the little town of Tripoli. Then I stopped in Sparta. Sparta was one of the great places that I wanted to see. I visited Mistra, where all the religious cathedrals were built on the mountainside. Up there, on the top, where the Spartans used to drop all the misfits of their people, the ones that didn't make it somatically (physically) or mentally, were thrown over the cliff. I saw that spot.

Then I came down and went from Sparta to the little town of Yuthion and took a boat. On this boat there was a group of soldiers, I'll never forget it. The Greek people are very hospitable and very warm. On this trip I didn't have any warm clothing, all I had was my sweater, and it was real cold. I huddled up on the floor waiting until I came down to the little town of Potamos in Kythera to get off the ship. One of the soldiers had come up and had taken off his great big military coat and threw it over me to keep me warm. Those are the kinds of things that warm me up to the Greek people. A wonderful gesture.

Hodak: It must have been tough to come back home.

Clentzos: (Laughter) Oh, yes. Then I got to this little island and took a rowboat from the ship. You had to take the rowboat over the waves into the beach. There were no piers, no landing. That's the way you had to come out to your ship. The ship docked maybe a half mile from the shore and you had to take the rowboat in. I went back and visited with my relatives and stayed there about two or three weeks.

Then John Fatseas and I, my teammates—the only ones that were left, the others had gone back early—we went through Europe on that Orient Express that they advertised so much. We stopped off at various places like Vienna, where we visited with the man that was on the Olympic Committee, a millionaire named Karl Schmidt, and visited his castle. Then we stopped off at Budapest, Hungary, at a clinic, the Hungarian School of Physical Education, where they gave clinics on pole vaulting and the hurdles. Then we came back and stopped off at Munich and stayed there a couple of nights, then to Berlin, and from Berlin to Cherbourg. Then we took the ship, the *Europa*, to come back home and arrived in New York sometime in December. Then I took the train back to Los Angeles.

Hodak: All told, quite an odyssey. No pun intended.

Clentzos: Yeah, that was a great trip. When I came back in 1935, I was looking for a job. They had a job open at Barstow, California. There were very few jobs at that time. I had very good references from Dean Cromwell and Howard Jones. There were about seven or eight of us vying for the job at Barstow, a football coach, teacher and director of athletics, and there were only about five or six teachers in the school. It was a school of about five hundred. So I got the job, I was lucky. This was in the fall of 1936. I was on the team entered in the Olympic Games in 1936 in Berlin. I was supposed to join the Greek team and compete in the pole vault at that time. I felt that I had spent quite a bit of time in Greece and if I missed this opportunity it would mean another year later, so I decided I should start my teaching career, which I did, in Barstow, California, as a high school coach. That left out the Olympics.

I had six good years at Barstow. I had championship teams in football and track. I loved the community. It was a great community, people were very nice. I had a lot of innovative ideas. That's where I met my wife Helen. She was a school

teacher there also, in the elementary school. She was from Occidental College. Then we started our life at that time until the war broke out.

Hodak: Then from there you went to Santa Ana Air Base?

Clentzos: Yes, in 1941 they had ideas about drafting me into the military. So I said, "Oh no." They said, "If you don't get down and join some outfit or volunteer, you're going to be in the service and you're going to be in the front ranks of the military, the infantry." So I got a job at the Santa Ana Army Air Base as a civilian director. That was enough to stop the draft and about six months later I became a first sergeant, master sergeant, then I went to OCS in Miami Beach and became a lieutenant. Then I came back to Santa Ana and I was physical training director in charge of judo and combat fighting and so on, where I made up a manual of dirty fighting tactics for the cadets. Santa Ana Army Air Base at that time housed about 42,000 cadets. There were bombardiers, pilots and navigators. From there, they went to the basic training centers and the advanced training centers and from there on went into combat. But Santa Ana to me was the beginning of a great experience. It was there that "hubba-hubba" was invented. Hubba-hubba was something I used to use in football in San Luis Obispo when I was part of the team. I'd say, "Hubba-hubba, let's get going" and it meant, move, get going. It meant motivation. So this was picked up by the Air Force and ended up on practically every corner of the globe.

At Santa Ana we instituted the track and field program. We had tremendous wrestling programs. I was in the service there for four years, transferred down to Williams Field, Arizona, where we were training officer cadets and students. Then I went to Stockton. I went back to Morrison Field back in Miami Beach and finally back to Camp Beal in Stockton, where I was separated in 1946. I came pretty close to going to the CBI

[China-Burma-India] Theater at that time.

Then I picked up my first job after separating from the service at Roosevelt High School, where I became the football coach and the track coach. I had some good teams at Roosevelt. I coached some great players there. I had some great track athletes. I had Norm Volen, who broke the city record in the shot put, and Manuel Ronquillo, a terrific high jumper. I also had Floyd Jeter, who was a great high jumper. So I had some good athletes there. One of the greatest athletes I had there was Willie Davis, who was one of the greatest sprinters. He later became a Los Angeles Dodger, since baseball was his sport. He was an outfielder for the Dodgers, a great athlete. He was probably one my greatest athletes. He was a great person too, a wonderful kid.

Hodak: Do you still keep in touch with him?

Clentzos: I hear him on the radio now and then. I've never gotten to see him. I'd like to meet him one of these days soon and talk over old times.

So that brings us up to 1946 through about 1949, I guess. I got my master's thesis and in 1946 I began to coach and teach at Roosevelt. In 1959 I became a vice-principal at Narbonne High School. But through the years—I was 13 years at Roosevelt—I enjoyed all the time. I gradually got into track and field officiating and that became my by-line. I had presidencies of a lot of groups at that time. At USC I was president of the Trojan Coaches Club and I am secretary treasurer of it today. The Trojan Track Alumni was another organization that I was very much interested in.

Hodak: How did you become involved in track and field officiating initially?

Clentzos: Well, I've always been interested in track, and one day the Track and Field Association asked me if I wanted to pursue my track and field and I said, "Sure." So they appointed me a pole vault judge. Then there was the Track and Field Starters Association that I joined in 1952. I wanted to be a track starter. Then, gradually, I also got into the Toastmaster's Club in the early fifties—my public speaking. And I entered a lot of contests and took a lot of pleasure in those—both humorous and serious speech contests—and I still enjoy those today.

Anyway, I became instructional chairman for track and field groups and this is a job I am still continuing now. And later on, in the 1984 Olympics, I was deputy manager of track and field officials for the Olympic Games held here in Los Angeles. I enjoyed doing that and I still do today. In fact, I am working on an examination right now for officials for 1988.

Hodak: What things do you work on?

Clentzos: Well, this is track and field rules—the techniques and the mechanics of officiating. For example, how you measure the long jump, how you measure the pole vault, how you inspect violations in running, and what to look for, starting techniques and so on. We train all of our officials to do these kinds of things in workshops and clinics during the year. With the modern methods of computers now and video, we do pretty well.

Hodak: Continue discussing your career as a school administrator and carry us through to your retirement.

Clentzos: Well, I went to Narbonne High School in 1959. I took a competitive examination for vice principals so I ended up in a fairly good position. My assignment was Narbonne High School which I enjoyed very much. There was a man there that was very experienced. Herb Morey, who was an athletics enthusiast

and we worked very well as a team. I was only there for one semester but I really enjoyed the pupils and the staff. Generally speaking, it was a great school.

Hodak: From Narbonne, where were you assigned?

Clentzos: Then I heard there were two positions open. First, I tried for the position of Director of Athletics for the City of Los Angeles. I was one of the top three selected for that position. There was Guy Wrinkle from Hollywood High School and also Jim Tunney, who many of you know now as a great professional official and speaker. Since the two of us were already selected as administrators, Guy Wrinkle got that job as Director of Athletics and did a very fine job. So I went to Franklin High School. They needed a new Assistant Principal so I got that job and spent 13 years there. I really enjoyed my experience at Franklin. It was a great school and very close to home. Narbonne was about an hour away and at that time the freeway didn't even exist. So, it was kind of a tiresome thing driving down there every morning. It took about an hour.

So at Franklin I was very happy with my duties. I was quite active in the community. I was with the Optimist Club for 15 years and enjoyed that experience very much, meeting with the people of the community and providing programs for them. One of the things that really interested me at Franklin was a year before I retired I took over the wrestling team. I always did want to coach a wrestling team in the city schools. We had some great boys at Franklin. That was the beginning of a tremendous wrestling program that Mike Young took over, who was the assistant coach at San Fernando High School at that time. When I left, he succeeded me as the coach of the wrestling team. He ended up with about three or four city titles. He was that good. Franklin is still one of the powers in wrestling as well as football. Armando Gonzales has done a great job. And before him, Jim Bogle and Gus Spraker were

great athletes. Of course, Frank Hess was one of the great coaches in the early days, one of the pioneers.

Hodak: And so you concluded your work with the schools

Clentzos: In 1974 I retired as assistant principal. We had a great party at Brookside with about 400 or 500 people there. They gave me a big send-off. It was something I'll never forget.

Hodak: Alongside this time period we've discussed, you were involved with a number of other facets of amateur sports, including early promotion of weight training. Would you discuss that a bit?

Clentzos: In 1958 Carson Conrad, who was the chief of physical education and health in the state of California, was on the Federated Council California Interscholastic Federation. He asked me to conduct a study on the improvement on physical performance through weight training and present a final study to the Federated Council. I carried on this survey throughout the entire state and it took quite a while to do it. I had a lot of help on it. I received all kinds of assistance from different people that were cooperative.

I do want you to know that the real pioneer in weight training was Otis Chandler. It was back in 1956-57 that he put out a brochure. He was a body-builder, a muscle man. He was a weight lifter from Stanford University. He had one of the highest performances in the entire world in the shot putting. I think he was putting around 55 feet. At that time, Parry O'Brien was the world record holder. He was putting it out about 57 or 58 feet. But Otis was no slouch. He was a well-built individual and he had a wonderful way of presenting. I went to one of his sessions and he impressed me very much. So when I made out the study, he put out a little manual that I followed. I give him a lot of credit for being one of the great

pioneers in weight training.

Hodak: Was there much resistance as late as the mid-'50s to weight training?

Clentzos: Well, everybody was thinking that it would make you muscle-bound and that the overdevelopment or the excessive size of the muscles became a hindrance. Actually, it wasn't. They said that overdeveloped muscles would cause the athlete to slow down. Then they said that many successful athletes never used weight training and even in the last couple of years I have heard the same thing. I have heard one of the great coaches of pole vaulting. Mr. Houvion of France, say that his vaulters never used weight training because he didn't believe in it. But I heard that two or three of them were sneaking weight training in and were doing a little better.

So the purpose of this study was to offer a program that would make athletes going out for competitive athletics a little stronger and able to handle themselves. The final analysis—the boom—was terrific. It was similar to something that Clark Shaughnessy at Stanford came out with, the T formation. Everybody was using it. Weight training had the same impact. Everybody began to use weight training. There were several successful schools in the world at that time. Like Yale University had a tremendous swimming team. Their coach attributed this to weight training. The University of Kentucky had a great basketball program and they attributed their success to weight training. So there were several schools that were using this weight training already and they were very successful at it. So when this thing began to boom through this questionnaire, we found out that there were so many schools that were thriving and benefiting by it that it became a tremendous program. Even today, you'll find so many sophisticated programs in weight training going on. In many schools and institutions now it's mandatory, especially in

athletics.

Basically, you improve the basic muscles first and then you specialize by using techniques to improve you in that particular event. So this is the way weight training is. I think we did a good job on it. I know everybody was pretty happy with the survey and the fact that it did improve athletic performance. I've always done a lot of that myself, even way back in the '30s. A lot of us used to go down to Crystal Beach, "muscle beach" they called it in those days. Everybody was doing weight training. So at USC we had a thorough program in that type of thing and many of us were experts at weight training. I used to climb rope and lift weights just so I could chin myself. I wasn't as good as Lee Barnes because he could chin himself with one hand, either hand, four or five times.

I still keep it up. I'm 78 now and I still do it three times a week at the Pasadena Athletic Club. It's a must if you want to keep in good physical condition.

Hodak: In addition to this you were involved in the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Health. How did you get involved in this?

Clentzos: Well, the first time was about 1972, the year of the Olympic Games in Munich. We had made reservations to go to Munich, but when we found out we had to live someplace about 70 miles away, we gave it up. So we began a tour of South America. Carson Conrad was the head of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and he wrote me a very nice letter of introduction to many of the countries we visited in South America. We went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, and various other countries in South America. We stopped in Caracas for example, and Colombia. We went to some of the other countries down there. He gave me a wonderful letter of introduction.

When I arrived there I said I wanted to visit schools and make a report on your program and report back to the federated council. We found out that they were pretty well advanced in quite a few of their activities. I was a little surprised because they have had teams coming down there for a long period of time and they were learning from them. I wanted to find out what their facilities were, and they were tremendous. They were improving all the time in the various sports. Boxing was one of their great events and, of course, soccer was a very outstanding sport that they had. They were getting interested in track and field. At that time, I was interested in their soccer program and they told me they were going to develop an indoor type of soccer to use on gym floors with a small, miniature ball. That's very much in evidence here in the States today—the indoor soccer is a big thing. At that time it was just starting to come around.

Hodak: In connection with your work on the Council on Physical Fitness and Health, you traveled other places also, correct?

Clentzos: One of the biggest events we had was in 1979 when I took a team of 16 over to the People's Republic of China to conduct a track tour. To give you a little background, in 1978 my wife and I went to China and we were added on as tourists at the last minute with this group from Stockton, California, promoting rice exports. So, it was a two-week program and we got on at the last minute through the CTA. They had a program up there and told us we could go through it with them. So we did and we had a wonderful time on that trip.

But I had a letter from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and wanted to see some of the Chinese authorities to set up a possible trip for the next year. One thing led to another and we stopped in Shanghai and I wanted to see one of the officials from the All-China Sports Federation. But the guys were a little bit stubborn and said we couldn't leave the group.

They watched you pretty carefully. You know, in 1978 it was just a little bit after people began to come in because Nixon set up the whole program. So, finally I told the guy that if I don't get to see one of the officials here my friends back in the States were going to be very disappointed. So he got me an interview with one of the officials. I sat down with him and brought over some brochures and examinations that we give to the track and field officials in Southern California and nationally. He looked it over and I said, "If you ever need any help in the future, let me know. I'd be glad to bring a team of coaches or officials over to help you with your program."

Well, I didn't think much about it. We went through the whole tour and had a wonderful time. We learned all about China and visited a lot of schools and got to see some of their sports programs. Helen was quite interested in the elementary program because she was a reading specialist in Pasadena. We got quite a bit out of that trip. It was September when we went over there, and about three or four months later I received a letter from the All-China Sports Federation asking if we could bring a team of officials over, mainly track and field coaches, to look over their athletes and give suggestions. It was a form of coaching clinic. Well, in 1975 the AAU had sent over a team of athletes. Giegengack was one of the instructors. He was a coach at Yale University. I think Charles Ruter went over. He is now the present official for national officials in the United States and later became very involved with the 1984 Olympics. They had a very successful trip. They went to the various cities and had athletes who gave exhibitions. They did a pretty good job on it.

Well, I knew about this and felt that we could do some good over there so I wrote them a letter and said I would be very happy to bring a group of officials over. So I contacted Carson Conrad and talked to him about it. He was in favor of

it and referred me to a gentleman named Herb Rathner, who was in the State Department. He put the blessings on the trip. So I began to get up a group. We got 15 coaches and my wife went along as a secretary. She did a marvelous job on it. We went to Peking and gave a clinic to 500 coaches. John Tansley of Glendale High School was one of the great organizers. He was the gentleman that I made instructional chairman at that time. He did a very fine job of organizing the curriculum for the trip. Of course, we had other great athletes like Don Ruh, who handled the Mt. San Antonio Relays for the last few years, and Ronnie Morris, a silver medalist in the 1960 Olympics in Rome. There were a great number of others on the trip.

We took this group over and got to Peking and they treated us royally. They put us up at a nice hotel. We had various sessions on the track that were very successful. Then we went to Shanghai and did the same thing. And we had exhibitions there. Then we went to Canton and spent a few days there. We stayed in very luxurious places. The trip was very successful. This was a very fine opportunity. Jack Balko, the head of the Accutrack timing system that's used extensively throughout the United States, was one of the sponsors for the trip and so was Universal Gym. Mr. George Ottot was one of our sponsors. He did a wonderful job on it. But we told the athletes that they would appreciate this trip until years afterwards, and I'm still getting calls from some of the people that were there saying that they really appreciated the trip. Now they begin to look back and it was one chance in a lifetime. They were very fortunate.

And later on, in 1981, we were having a golf tournament on the island of Corfu and I wrote my friend Otto Szymiczek, who was one of the great Olympic officials and is promoting for the 1996 Olympics in Athens. I wrote him that we were coming over and if I could do anything to help him I'd be happy to contribute to the Olympic Movement down in Olympia and Greece. There was

an organization known as the International Coaches Association and they meet in Olympia. At that time he asked me to come down and give a lecture on this trip to China, which I did.

The trip to Olympia that year was quite interesting because the Russians were there giving a report on projecting Olympic performances in future Olympiads. They were explaining how everything was improving right along. I remember the lady that was with this Russian representative came over to my wife and asked for her help in writing something in English. The three languages that were being used were French, Greek and English. All the delegates were sitting there with headphones on, being from different countries. So this was quite an impressive thing. We had coaches from all over the world. They came from South America and India. Some of them came from Japan. They were a very impressive group.

They had a dormitory that we stayed at for a week. And there was good Greek food—well prepared by the chefs. I'm drooling now over some of the delicacies that they had. They had entertainment. You won't believe this, but one of the representatives was C.K. Yang. Remember, he won the decathlon at UCLA. C.K. Yang was still smarting under the defeat by Rafer Johnson in the decathlon. In the 1960 Olympics, Rafer won the decathlon and C.K. Yang came in second. In fact, C.K. was so down that I don't think he even attended the showing of that film during the conference. Anyway, we did have some great representatives. Bill Easton was there. I think he was the coach of Al Oerter, the discus thrower from Kansas. So we had a great time. It was wonderful.

Hodak: You gave a lecture . . .

Clentzos: Yes, my lecture was on how China had improved so rapidly. I discussed the trip and named many of the events that they

would do well in. They had a high jumper then that held the world record. He jumped about 7 feet 9 in the high jump. And they had good vaulters and some very fine athletes. They were coming up. I predicted that China was like a "sleeping giant" and that they would wake up some day and be an enormous power in many of the competitive events.

So they did come to Los Angeles in 1984. I met some of the coaches there—some very fine men. I talked with some of the athletes and revived old memories of our trip in 1979.

Hodak: And what else would you want to discuss about your involvement in various organizations?

Clentzos: Well, I was national director of athletics for the Order of AHEPA, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. I was the national director starting way back in the '30s. That was something I kept up all through the years. That was something that I cherish very much and I am still pretty active in it. Now I am western zone director for the Order of AHEPA, running golf tournaments. I was quite interested in promoting athletics to the Greek youth and back in 1935 we held our first Hellenic Olympiad in Los Angeles at Fremont High School. We had something like 3,000 people attending that affair. We had about 50-60 athletes from all over California. They came in from Bakersfield, Santa Barbara and Oxnard. They came from all directions. We had A, B and C classifications. No girls were participating at that time but later on they were admitted. They were very successful. I remember we had an Olympiad queen and a big banquet afterwards. In 1935, we had Howard Jones from the University of Southern California and George Davis from the *News Herald*. They both gave wonderful speeches to the athletes. It was down at Sixth and Broadway at a place called Club LaSalle. It was run by George Parnassus who later became a great promoter of boxing, and a very beloved man to the media. We

had a great affair reviving old memories and so forth.

Well, later on, as I became national director, we branched off into a national program. One of the first Olympiads we had nationally was back in Providence, Rhode Island. I think it was about 1937 or '38. And you won't believe this, but Spiro Agnew was a competitor in one of those Olympiads. He ran the 100, the hurdles, and was on the relay team. I pointed this out to him years afterwards in a national banquet in Washington, D.C. and he admitted it and was very proud of the fact that he was a competitor in those days.

We had an Olympiad in Seattle in 1941 at the University of Washington. One of the funny things about that one was that we didn't have too many spectators up there, so I brought an applause record with me. When the athletes started running the final turn, I turned the loud speaker on and it sounded like 100,000 people in the stadium. It was a great trick that I used, and it drew a lot of attention.

In 1941, the year I got married, we went back to Cincinnati, Ohio, and had our Olympiad at Withrow High School. In 1942, '43, '44, '45 and '46 we were in the service and we kind of discontinued them. But in 1948 we revived them in Detroit and in '49 we were in Miami. We were in Cleveland the next year, then Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., Houston, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, New York City.

In 1957 we had an eight-man squad going to Greece. So we promoted two trips—one was in 1957. At that time I had some very good athletes—Mike Caraftis (Alabama), who was in the Army, ran a pretty good quarter-mile. He ran the 880 in about 1:50. Jim Saras of Stanford University ran the 100 in about 9.6. Socrates Bajjackas (Dallas)—there's a great name—ran the 880 in 1:56 and the mile. George Stathopoulos, of the University of Michigan was a long jumper. And Alex Karras,

believe it or not, was on this trip; he was a shot putter and a discus thrower. Another great two-miler, Louis Vlogianitis, of Adelphi College in New York, ran the mile at that time. So that was a great trip. We were confined to about 28 days by the AAU, who approved the trip. One of the teams that we met was Czechoslovakia, in the old stadium in Athens. We competed with them and made a great showing. We were well-received by the Creek people, being Americans of Creek descent.

One of the biggest ones that we had was when the AHEPA held their national convention in Athens in 1970. We took over a team of about 15 or 20 people. It was a very successful trip. We had individuals on the team who were great athletes, like Jeff Chase from San Jose State University, who was a jumping competitor to Chris Papanicolaou, a great vaulter of that time from Greece who later broke the world's record in 1971. He was the first jumper to go over 18 feet. That was in Athens in the new stadium. Chris was a former student at San Jose State University and he was very familiar with the American boys and their records. Chris Papanicolaou is one of the key figures, being an ex-athlete and a professor at one of the colleges there in Athens, who's on the committee to promote the return of the Olympic Games in 1996 in Athens. He's doing a good job on that now.

But this team in 1970 was a great team. We had some very outstanding individuals on it. And I want to somehow bring to your attention who some of these people were. On this trip in 1970, we called it the AHEPA All-Star Track Team, and we gave an exhibition tour in Greece. The last meet we had was August fifth and sixth. We had the beautiful, modern Karaiskaki Stadium in Athens, right down by Piraeus. There's a railway system that leads right to it. It's a beautiful stadium. The track is Rekortan, just like they have in the Coliseum now. One thing about the facilities over there—they don't mince on

them because they are getting ready for the Olympics now. Of course, even in those days they were thinking ahead about all the stadia and facilities that they would need for the 1996 Olympics.

On this particular trip there was a thrilling victory by James Legakis of St. John's University. He was a distance man. While he was over there, during the first part of the trip, his father died and he had to go back to the States. It really depressed the team. But he came back and he won this race. His teammates swarmed over him after his victory. It was an inspirational victory because our athletes really felt passion for him and his problem. So it was a great recuperation. It did everybody some good.

Well, it was kind of tough for our kids because a lot of our athletes weren't of the national caliber. We had a tough assignment. Greece had a 17-foot vaulter, 7-foot high jumpers, and they had outstanding men in the sprints. They had stellar athletes. But we did pretty well with them. We had individuals from various universities. We had Mike Karafiotis, who did pretty well in the 100. We had Norman Barris, Harry Manesis, Billy Kyrkostas, Demetrios Fragopoulos. Those names will choke you if you try to pronounce them. We also had Steve Mellos and Steve Scarvelos. These were all sprinters but in the 400 meters we had Basil Papaharis and John Mitsopoulos. I just want you to know that this was in Greece. In the high jump, Mike Karafotias jumped about 6 feet 7 inches, which was pretty good in those days. In the shot put we had a real fine athlete from Pepperdine [University], Bernie Vlahakos. He put the shot about 52 feet 5 inches. He was very good in the discus and placed in that. Jeff Chase, the vaulter from San Jose State who did 16 feet, was a very outstanding athlete. We had two or three vaulters, Jim Mavromatis and John Tibbetts, who cleared about 15 feet. We also did well in the discus and in the relays. But we did have a mishap. One of our best

hurdlers, Jim Fasulis, got hurt. He injured his ankle and couldn't compete. So this trip was successful in spite of the dysentery and diarrhea problems.

The purpose of the program is to bring our athletes, Greeks of American descent, back to their home country to visit their relatives, intermingle with the culture and visit the old ancient ruins of the Acropolis and the other buildings and areas that were so remarkably well-preserved so that they could see their heritage. So, those two trips, 1957 and 1970, stand out as milestones in this program.

At the present time I think my chief interest is in the golf tournaments that we run. The western zone tournament of the Order of AHEPA . . . we have six areas of the country that hold these zone tournaments and they meet nationally every year in conjunction with the national convention. Dr. Monte Kofos, who runs the program now and has for the last 18 years, is doing a marvelous job in maintaining a real sense of competition. I think it's one of the most successful programs of any fraternity in the country.

So, AHEPA is a great program of not only track and field and golf but swimming, tennis and basketball is one of their biggest sports. We've had teams representing AHEPA going to Greece every two years and compete on an international basis. They have an eight- or nine-game schedule with Spiros Siaggas of Reno who's director of the tournament. We have other individuals who help out on it also. It's a great program and I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to become a part of it.

Hodak: Now, you've also worked with alumni organizations . . .

Clentzos: One of my pet programs is the Trojan Coaches Club at USC, which was founded way back in the early '40s. At that time, it

was a very outstanding organization. Now it's more or less as social club. We have two meetings a year where we invite people and honor them. We also have a golf tournament every year near Easter. We say it's the first rainy day in the Easter vacation because it mostly rains at that time. But we have been pretty fortunate. All the outstanding athletes of past years go to it. We really enjoy it. It's a chance to fraternize and keep up our connections with the great heritage at USC.

The Trojan Track Alumni is another organization that I am interested in and help support. Being on the USC track team was always one of my greatest experiences and something I'll never forget. We get together and have a meeting every spring to kick off the track season. *We're* not doing too well track-wise at USC because of the limited number of scholarships. *We're* trying to promote scholarships. What makes it kind of tough is that women have equal financial opportunities the same as the men and that kind of divides by two any totals we get. But we can all survive on that too. But the Trojans are coming along pretty well on the recruitment. They're doing the best they can. Of course, the arch rival, UCLA, is way ahead of us for the present time. Only time will tell what will happen. But track at USC will come back. I firmly believe in it. I think it will in time, just like everything else.

Hodak: Now tell me, in addition to the work you've already discussed, what sort of hobbies do you pursue? What various ways do you have of staying fit?

Clentzos: Well, fitness is one of my manias. I firmly believe that anybody who is an athlete now and wants to take care of his body until he's way up in the 70s or 80s, I think you have to treat your body like a fine instrument—like a fine piece of machinery. It's like your car. Some people take better care of their cars than they do their bodies. Some people just put oil

in when it starts to smoke. They put gas in when it's almost empty. They don't tune it up. My brother-in-law had a Mustang that went over 130,000 miles because he changed the oil every month. I think you have to keep up your body with some form of exercise; whether it's walking or swimming or whether you go to the gym and work out with weights. I think you have to make time for it. You don't just do it by haphazard methods. You have to set time every day, just like you do when you eat. If you don't take the time to pay attention to your body's needs, then trouble begins. I found that out when I was assistant principal at Franklin. For a few years there I kind of subsided in my training program. Then one day I had to chase a kid and when I started running I pulled a hamstring. I said, "This is it." So I began a concentrated program working in the gym and working on my muscles. Now I work out three times a week. I walk in the morning. When I get up I do a lot of exercises. I do my push-ups, my sit-ups, my straddle-hops and then I go out and take a walk for at least 20-30 minutes. This is a ritual that I follow every day, if I can. Then, three times a week I go to the gym—every other day if possible. I try to get there and work on the weights, walk on the treadmill, run a bicycle around the track, and do a little swimming to get the circulation moving. I think it is imperative that you take care of your body. That's my advice to anybody, even you.

As I said, my wife passed away about two-and-a-half years ago. She was a wonderful lady—a wonderful person. She left behind monuments of her work, which I cherish today. I have a son that's about 41 now. He went to LaVerne College and started coaching at Schurr High School. Then he went into aquatics and became operations director for the *Orange Torpedo* boats up in Oregon. They ran four or five rivers up there. It used to be a summer job but he got into it on a full-time basis. Just last year he decided he wanted to do something else so he is looking into some other kind of work right now.

He is presently recreation director at the Naval Training Station in San Diego.

I'm pretty busy. We have a place at Laguna, one in Palm Desert and this place in Pasadena. Between those three, I am pretty busy trying to keep up on everything. One of my greatest interests right now is what we call The Athletics Congress (TAC). It used to be the AAU. At that time the czar of the AAU was a man named Dan Ferris. Of course, Avery Brundage comes into the picture. He was the head of the Olympic Movement. The Athletics Congress, as they call it now, always has been closely associated with the Olympic Movement. In fact, Ollan Cassell, who is the executive director for The Athletics Congress right now is a vice-president for the International Federation. That's the ruling body for international competition like the Olympics.

In The Athletics Congress, athletics means track and field. I was confused a little bit at first because everywhere but the United States athletics pertains to track and field. Everyone should distinguish that the word athletics means track and field. When you hear that word, it shouldn't mislead anybody.

The Athletics Congress has a very dedicated group of people. Some members have been associated with it for years. They provide opportunities for practically any sport, especially track and field. They have youth and master's sections, and long distance and various disciplines. They have a long distance association, a gymnastic association, a track and field, and a volleyball association. All of these are separate now and have been for a few years.

The leadership is very good. It's all spelled out. The Athletics Congress promotes a great number of meets—conference meets, for example. They promote off-season activities. They have a very intense schedule. They have

certain standards that the athletes must conform to if they aspire to be competitive athletes. They have certain standards that they must qualify for in order to be in meets. Their sanction is very important; it's a must for any event that's notable at all. It has to be sanctioned by The Athletics Congress. In fact, they control anyone that wants to go overseas and compete in international meets. You can't go over there unless you are sanctioned by The Athletics Congress (TAC). I remember when I wanted to take my teams over in 1957 and 1970, they had to approve of them. They investigated them and then you couldn't compete for more than 28 days. Then any association overseas that wanted to challenge any group coming over or any group that slip out and compete overseas couldn't do so unless the two parties knew about it. So all these athletes that compete now in Europe and receive compensation for their services, especially track and field, have to be approved by TAC. They've liberalized a lot of their regulations, especially financially. So athletes who were getting a lot under the table are now getting it outright because they own the trust funds. TAC has an advisory board composed of athletes who fought for this, like Willie Banks and Hodges and a few of those others who were forerunners in getting approval of trust funds. I think Dwight Stones was another one who used to go to Europe and receive benefits. But they were pioneers in getting this approved.

Anyway, I first got into this in early 1950. Lee Hansen at that time was one of the official photographers for the Olympic Games. He was a real enthusiast for track and field in Southern California. Anybody will know Lee Hansen because he was very dynamic. He was a USC athlete, a mile runner. One of the great things that Lee did was to promote athletics and track and field. He became the commissioner out here. So he appointed me as an aide to make up tests and examinations as far back as 1952. That's a job I have held ever since that time. In fact, I just got through making up a 100-question

completion test for the track and field officials for Southern California, which will be given out very shortly.

So I made up tests and examinations and we had clinics. We were very conscientious about our track and field program here in Southern California. In fact, I was a member of the Southern California Track Starters organization. Anyone who starts any track meets in Southern California gets his training from the Track Starters Association. It's a great organization. I urge anyone who is interested in track starting to become a member of it. We hold our meetings and we have clinics. We have down to earth clinics where the track starters take their weapons along and practice starting techniques with athletes from different high schools. Ed Austin is the instructional chairman at the present time. Before him, Walt Smith had this title for many many years. I was president of the track starters in the early '50s.

But coming back to TAC; we had the Olympic tryouts in 1984 and all of our officials were so well-trained. At the 1984 Olympics we had about 206 officials from all over the country. We had 50 of them from Southern California. For weeks and weeks before the Olympics our officials carried on clinics. We were very well qualified.

Of course, one of the men that made all of this happen was Andy Bakjian. He introduced the uniforms and a great number of innovative things. He was a stickler on discipline for the officials about not smoking and not wearing anything on the uniform that was not acceptable to TAC. He went to the national conventions and he induced and inspired officials from all over the country to conform to the regulations. He adopted national tests.

Today we have officials in what we call the pre-association. We have the national officials and then we have the certified

officials who are called masters, who earn their way. They have to be in the organization five or six years, take tests, and be rated and evaluated by master officials. I have a staff right now of maybe 10 or 15 top officials that are doing a great job in clinics and in evaluating officials. We have individuals like Al Pina in the long jump and Jim Carson. We have Dr. Dave Schwartz in the high jump along with Bill O'Rourke. In the pole vault we have one of the greatest officials who officiated in the Olympic Games, Fred Arnold. In the javelin we have Lee Shilling. We have Bob Seaman, who was one of the high officials in TAC, and a top official in the javelin and the discus. We have starters like Walt Smith and all the rest of them down the line. In the race-walking we have Murray Rosenstein, who is leaving us. He's leaving for Jerusalem to live over there. He's been a race-walking judge for years here. He's a very outstanding individual. We have outstanding timers like Brian Bennett and Don Thomas. We have all the finish judges that are doing great jobs. I can't recall most of their names at the present time. But TAC is a great organization.

They are having a convention in December where all the outstanding personnel that's attached to TAC will go over the rules. Leo Costanzo is our official representative. He's on the rules committee and he's from Southern California. He'll be there. Mary Bakjian, wife of Andy, who passed away, will be there also. She's secretary of the organization. Our present commissioner is Herman Reininga. He and his lovely wife Evelyn do a fine job.

So we have a great staff who do a great job. The secret of it is in-service training, which we carry on extensively. And we are happy to admit new members. We have about 30 new ones this year and we hope to get more. So if anyone is really interested in becoming an official it's no big deal. All you have to do is contact one of the officials and tell them you're interested. We will be very happy to accept you into our

ranks.

The 1984 Olympics was the highlight of officials. All of our officials were well trained. I think everybody did a good job. All of the inspectors, umpires and referees were well qualified. I think one of the greatest jobs was done by Mort Tenner, who was the competitions chairman. Upon his head lay the organization and putting into action all of the heats and the thousands of different details that go into making a successful track and field program function. He did a marvelous job on it. He has a wonderful memory and a real sense of organization. Of course, he was the principal of Franklin High School for all the years that I was there, so I worked closely with him. So that sums up TAC. It will keep going on and on. And the people running it are very dedicated.

Hodak: Certainly you are one of those dedicated people. I think we have covered much of your work in amateur sports. I wonder if you have any summary thoughts on the Olympic Movement over the years, changes that you've seen. Any general thoughts on these matters that you may not have already outlined up to now?

Clentzos: Well, I have given you what I think is the most important part of the Olympism, as it was conceived in the minds of the Hellenic people of those days. Baron de Coubertin's idea was to really inspire the athletes, not so much to win, but to compete—to be a part of it. I think the Olympic caliber athlete is really something hard to attain. Very few people attain it. You have to be one of the best in the world to be an Olympian, especially in this country. You have to compete with people who spend hours and hours everyday in training. Every great swimmer like [Mark] Spitz and [John] Naber, when they are through they just sit back and relax and think about the six or seven hours a day that they put in. Any great Olympic athlete—track and field, gymnastics or any sport—has to be

tops. You can only do this by being inspired and dedicated. You've got to have some talent too. You don't get anywhere without talent. If you have any kind of talent at all, I think drive is the thing that gets you there more than anything else.

In all my toastmasters experience I think the one story that can sum this up is . . . If you want to be a champion athlete, or if you want to be the best in the world, this story will exemplify it. There was a youth in Athens and he went up to Socrates, the great philosopher, and asked him, "What do I have to do to become a great physician?" And Socrates said, "Come with me." And he led him down to the ocean, and he waded with the young man, hand in hand, until they came up to a height where the water reached their chests. The young man said, "Tell me what I have to do?" And Socrates said, "Be patient. I'll tell you." So he grabbed the young man's head and put it under the water and held it there until the boy was practically drowning. Then he lifted his head up and the boy gasped and finally got his breath back. The old philosopher looked at him and said, "What was the one thing you wanted the most while you were under water?" The boy said, "I wanted to breathe. I wanted to breathe." And the philosopher said, "When you want to be a physician like you wanted that air under the water, then you will become a great physician." And that's what makes Olympic champions.

Hodak: I want to thank you for your time. Certainly anybody interested in the Olympic Movement or sports in general will benefit greatly from your oral history. The Amateur Athletic Foundation appreciates your cooperation and participation in the project. And I appreciate your time also. Thank you.

Clentzos: Thank you. Braven Dyer [Jr.] has been one of my great friends through the years. I appreciated his help through the years. You've been very cooperative and very kind with your time. I extend my thanks to you too.

I want to add something else too. I can't thank the Foundation without going back to the early '30s when Bill Schroeder was the head of the Helms Athletic Foundation. When I was coaching at Roosevelt and even at Barstow back in the early '30s, I used to go to the Helms Athletic Foundation. It was something I looked forward to. I had a quarterback at Barstow High School, Sheridan "Peanuts" Griffith, who was on the second team for All-Southern California quarterback in football. Bill Schroeder was down there and Seth Van Patten, who was the commissioner of athletics in Southern California at that time. These two individuals were great, great men. Bill has done so much—a lot of testimonials—and I don't think anybody can really mention the Amateur Athletic Foundation without mentioning Bill Schroeder. There should be a monument erected in his name. He and Braven Dyer [Jr.] have done so much. I just want Bill to know that I'm thinking about him and my prayers are for him. He's a great man. He did so much to improve athletics in the world, not just in Southern California.