

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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UT SOUTHWESTERN FACULTY MEMBER INDUCTED INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOLAR-ATHLETE HALL OF FAME

DALLAS – May 26, 1999 – A faculty member at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas who is a three-time Olympic gold medalist joins two former U.S. presidents, a retired Supreme Court judge and 14 others as the first inductees into the International Scholar-Athlete Hall of Fame.

Dr. Peter Snell, a former record holder in the mile, is an assistant professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern.

The Institute for International Sport polled more than 2,000 individuals in 150 countries, including journalists, college presidents, Olympic officials, government officials and former athletes. A list of 50 distinguished semifinalists was culled on the basis of achievements in sport, academics and contributions to society. The list was then winnowed down to the first class of 18 inductees.

“In the United States and around the world we tend to honor the great athlete,” said Daniel Doyle, founder and executive director of the institute. “Meanwhile, we praise the scholar-athlete, but never really honor him or her. The International Scholar-Athlete Hall of Fame will now honor the world’s greatest scholar-athletes.”

The induction ceremonies will take place June 27 at the International Scholar-Athlete Hall of Fame, which is on the campus of the University of Rhode Island.

Considered a long shot, with a world ranking of 25 when he was selected for the New Zealand Olympic team in 1960, Snell won the 800-meters (one-half mile) race in record time. Four years later in Tokyo, he won both the 800- and 1,500-meter races – a feat that has not been accomplished since. In 1961, he set world records for 800 meters, 880 yards and the mile. He also set indoor world records for the 880 and 1,000 yards.

Like many of the other Hall of Fame inductees, many of Snell’s achievements have been accomplished off the field.

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Snell has firsthand experience on the problems athletes have to endure when their sports career expires and they don't have the skills necessary to pursue other careers. "I know what it feels like to be famous and not be influential due to a lack of knowledge," he said.

At the age of 34, he enrolled at the University of California, Davis. He completed his bachelor of science in human performance in three years and financed his master's and doctoral degrees at Washington State University by participating in "Super Stars," an event televised on ABC in 1976.

After earning his doctorate, he was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship at UT Southwestern. He has written or been co-author of 60 published papers and abstracts on exercise-related research. Snell and his wife, Miki, are active in the sport of orienteering, timed cross-country competition in which runners follow a course using a compass and map, and are the current U.S. champions in their age group.

Other inductees include:

- Bill Bradley, who played for the New York Knicks and served in the U.S. Senate for three terms. He is currently seeking the Democratic nomination for U.S. president.
- Retired U.S. Supreme Court Judge Byron "Whizzer" White, who played professional football for Pittsburgh in 1938, left the National Football League in 1939 to attend Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar and was later named to the U.S. Supreme Court, on which he served from 1962 to 1993.
- Sir Roger Banister, who was the first athlete to run the mile in less than four minutes. He withdrew from competition after receiving his medical license. He was a consultant in neurology at London hospitals and later president of the International Council for Sport and Physical Recreation.
- Former President Gerald Ford, who played football for University of Michigan and was an assistant coach at Yale University.
- Former President George Bush, who was captain of the baseball team at Yale University, where he was also a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

"I am very flattered to be a part of such esteemed company," said Snell.

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