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Grace F. Thorpe collection - Newspaper Clippings: Jim Thorpe Legacy, 1971-1972

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[[newspaper clipping]]

THE NATIVE NEVADAN
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Ford blocks for Thorpe

President Ford has requested that the International Olympic Committee reinstate world famous Jim Thorpe as an amateur athlete in good standing for the period of 1909-1912.

Thorpe, who died in 1953 at 64, was the great-grandson of famous Sac and Fox Chief Black Hawk, according to Dr. Theodore Marrs, a special assistant to the President in the Office of Public Liaison.

The President echoed requests made earlier by the U.S. Olympic Committee and Amateur Athletic Union. He called Thorpe "one of the greatest athletes the world has known. He had become a legend in this country."

President Ford said, "Throughout my life and my active participation in sports, the name of Jim Thorpe has represented excellence, dedication, pride and competitive zeal."

Thorpe's medals, won in Olympic competitions, were thrown out because of a technicality over his eligibility. He was the first and is the only Olympic athlete to ever win both the decathlon and pentathlon accomplishing that feat at the 1912 Games in Stockholm.

"To Americans of Indian heritage, Mr. Thorpe has meant even more. He is a hero, and in the American Indians' struggle for human dignity and freedom, Jim Thorpe represents a man who is able to contribute significantly to the American society while retaining the values of his cultural ties with the past," said the President.

The President, an avid sports fan, made his request as a private American citizen "with a lifetime interest in sports." The President concluded his request to Lord Michael Killanin, President of the International Olympics Committee, by saying, "I hope the committee will consider this request an act with a sense of equity in light of history and of the contribution that Jim Thorpe has made to the world of sports."

The White House Office of Public Liaison headed by Assistant to the President, William J. Baroody, Jr., pointed out that Jim Thorpe is an important symbol of heritage and pride for Indians throughout the Nation, and most minorities have empathy for his plight.



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