

For Immediate Release – November 6, 2009

Olympians of the Bow Valley
November 21, 2009 – April 4, 2010

Banff, Alberta – Every four years, the best athletes in the world match skill and endurance in a series of contests called the Olympic Winter Games. The purposes of these games are to foster the ideal of a “sound mind in a sound body” and to promote friendship among nations. Olympic athletes are the greatest ambassadors of goodwill in the world of sports.

For decades, the Bow Valley has been home to, and a training ground for, hundreds of people who have excelled at their sport and been chosen to represent Canada at the Olympic Winter Games.

Craig Richards, Curator of Photography, has chosen twelve athletes to participate in this exhibition – only a small selection of the amazing athletes from the Bow Valley that have represented Canada. The exhibit includes an action photograph of each athlete participating in their sport (chosen by each one personally), as well as a story about a memorable Olympic experience, in their own words. We also asked for an item that represented either their sport, or their Olympic experience, and visitors will be able to view memorabilia that ranges from racing skis used to win a gold medal, opening ceremony uniforms, a Silver Medal, Olympic bibs, and much more. On the eve of the upcoming games in Vancouver, B.C. in February 2010, this exhibition is a tribute to all those who are the best athletes in the world.

Says Richards, “This exhibition is as much about the individual athlete’s stories, as it is about the photos and memorabilia. Their stories are full of heart, full of feeling, full of memories. They give incredible insight into what many of us will never personally experience, participating in the Olympics.”

Not every Olympic story comes with a medal on the podium. Ken Read’s loss of a ski at Lake Placid in 1980 is a case in point. Although he didn’t finish the race, in this excerpt from his exhibition story, he looks at the experience in a way that epitomizes the Olympic spirit.

I must be queried at least once every week about this moment. Questions like “Was it crushing?” or “We’re you disappointed after all that work?” Certainly, I was disappointed. But more so it was frustrating to not really have a chance to challenge the Olympic downhill. To be a favourite and have the Holy Grail of Olympic sport snatched away is more testing than disappointing. Because this is sport. To reach for the golden moment entails taking risks, which can bring triumph and disaster.

Did it hurt? You bet. Was it worth the commitment? Definitely. Would I encourage my kids to pursue this challenge? Absolutely. The Olympics are much more than just one race. They are so very important because they challenge athletes to seek excellence and to live boldly. These two guideposts provide inspiration to young children around the world to dream big dreams and the motivation to pursue them. The grand show taps into our emotions, reaching to young and old with moments of elation and sadness. They can make you burst with pride as flag-bearer for the Opening Ceremony, or if fortune smiles in the medal ceremony, to crown an Olympic Champion.

Sure, Lake Placid didn't work out the way I would have liked, but it was one step in a long journey that took a young ski racer from the Canadian Rockies to the pinnacle of ski racing.

~ Ken Read

Participating Athletes

CHANDRA CRAWFORD , <i>Cross-Country Skiing</i>	2006 Turin
THOMAS GRANDI , <i>Alpine Skiing</i>	2006 Turin 2002 Salt Lake City 1998 Nagano 1994 Lillehammer
DAVID IRWIN , <i>Alpine Skiing</i>	1980 Lake Placid 1976 Innsbruck
SANDRA KEITH , <i>Biathlon</i>	2006 Turin
DEVON KERSHAW , <i>Cross-Country Skiing</i>	2006 Turin
KAREN PERCY LOWE , <i>Alpine Skiing</i>	1988 Calgary
KEN READ , <i>Alpine Skiing</i>	1980 Lake Placid 1976 Innsbruck
SARA RENNER , <i>Cross-Country Skiing</i>	2006 Turin 2002 Salt Lake City 1998 Nagano
SHONA RUBENS , <i>Alpine Skiing</i>	2006 Turin
BECKIE SCOTT , <i>Cross-Country Skiing</i>	2006 Turin 2002 Salt Lake City 1998 Nagano
MILAINÉ THERIAULT , <i>Cross-Country Skiing</i>	2006 Turin 2002 Salt Lake City 1998 Nagano
PHIL WIDMER , <i>Cross-Country Skiing</i>	2006 Turin

Exhibition-Related Events

Opening Reception

Saturday, November 21, 2009, 7 to 9 PM

Thursday Night @ the Whyte, \$2 non-members, FREE for members

Thomas Grandi and his Olympic Experience

Thursday, November 26, 7 PM

Olympian and World Cup champion Thomas Grandi will share his experiences in the world of competitive skiing. Come and enjoy this colourful and inspiring presentation.

About the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies welcomes those who are drawn to the power and inspiration of these mountains. We are the gateway for experiencing and enjoying its art, culture and history in order to inspire and cultivate knowledge and the exchange of ideas. Visitors from near and far experience the Museum's galleries, programs, archives and library, heritage homes, museum shop, guided walks, tours and special events.

- 30 -

For more information about this exhibition, and the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, please contact:

Katie Daniel, Marketing & Communications Specialist

111 Bear St, Box 160, Banff, Alberta T1L 1A3

403-762-2291 ext. 316

kdaniel@whyte.org

www.whyte.org