



MEDIA RELEASE

**TORONTO OLYMPIC SPIRIT CENTRE PROMISES
CDN. OLYMPIANS AND SPORTS RECOGNITION THEY DESERVE
COA "thrilled to be part of such a fun, exciting and dynamic project"**

TORONTO (November 26, 2001) – "The Toronto Olympic Spirit center, which was unveiled today, will give Canadian Olympic athletes and sports much higher profiles and the increased attention they deserve, by bringing their stories and images to half a million visitors annually," said Michael Chambers, President of the Canadian Olympic Association. "Importantly," he added, "people – young and old alike – will be able to experience the sports and intensity of the competitions personally through the interactive exhibits and demonstrations. This will give everyone attending a sincere appreciation for what the athletes experience – and endure. And we expect that appreciation to translate into heightened public support. We're thrilled to be part of such a fun, exciting and dynamic project."

Mr. Chambers noted that the Toronto Olympic Spirit center is the kind of complex that the COA could never afford to create on its own. "We are 100% supportive of this tribute to Olympic heroes, history and sports. We would never have the resources alone to bring this kind of recognition and attention to Olympians and their sports, but it is a wonderful example of what committed parties can accomplish when they work together." He added that the Toronto Olympic Spirit Centre will build on the excitement created during Toronto's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games and which continues to grow with Canada's bid for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver-Whistler.

An advisory board of Canadian Olympians, both competing and retired, will play a significant role in the development of the centre. The Olympian advisory board will be named later this year or early next.

Mr. Chambers explained that the COA will share the royalties generated by the Toronto Olympic Spirit center equally with the IOC. "The COA's proceeds will be re-invested in our grant programs and services for Canadian athletes and coaches," he said.

There is no greater icon of Canadian pride than a Canadian Olympic athlete, said Mr. Chambers. "It will be an honour to see so many of our heroes recognized in the Toronto Olympic Spirit center, where so many visitors can share the pride," he said.

The COA, a private, not-for-profit corporation, is the largest private sector funder of high performance sport in Canada. It is responsible for all aspects of Canada's involvement in the Olympic Movement, including Canada's participation in the Olympic and Pan American Games. In addition, the COA manages a wide variety of programs that promote the Olympic Movement in Canada through cultural and educational means. For more information see the COA website: www.coa.ca

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For more information, please contact François Puchin,
COA Media Relations at (514) 861-3371 ext. 228.
Ce communiqué est aussi disponible en français.

2070 rue Peel/
Peel Street
Bureau/Suite 300
Montréal, QC
Canada H3A 1W6
☎ (514) 861-3371
☎ (514) 861-2896

85 Albert Street/
rue Albert
Suite/Bureau 1400
Ottawa, ON
Canada K1P 6A4
☎ (613) 244-2020
☎ (613) 244-0169

21 St. Clair Ave. E./
av. St. Clair E.
Suite/Bureau 900
Toronto, ON
Canada M4T 1L9
☎ (416) 962-0262
☎ (416) 967-4902