



The whole planet was our audience

My 2002 Olympic experience

This past year, I have had the opportunity to serve not only my country, but the entire world. Last summer, I was hired as an intern for the Ceremonies Department of the Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the XIX Olympic Winter Games. This internship allowed me to see the Olympic Games from a completely wild and extraordinary perspective. I worked with every aspect of the Olympic ceremonies from the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, to the Torch Relay, to the medals presentations at Olympic Medals Plaza. When I first started at SLOC, my primary task was to organize all of the auditions for the Olympic venues and live sites. This task required me to search Salt Lake City for every kind of talent imaginable. I found bands, singers, dancers, cheerleaders, musicians, jugglers and clowns. Each of them was auditioned for a spot to perform at the Olympic Winter Games. I even auditioned for a spot in the cast of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

After the summer, I returned to JMU for the fall semester. The events of last September gave us more reason to produce shows that paralleled the Olympic movement in efforts to unify the entire world. Later in the fall, I was promoted to assistant cast coordinator of Olympic Medals Plaza (OMP). And I received a letter of acceptance to the cast of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

In December, I was asked to travel to Atlanta, Ga., to assist with the start of the Olympic Torch Relay. While in Atlanta, I worked with such inspirational athletes such as speed-skater Bonnie Blair, cyclist Lance Armstrong, figure skater Peggy Flemming and boxer Muhammad Ali. I had my picture taken on stage in Atlanta, just hours before the ceremony, holding the torch that Muhammad Ali would use to start the Torch Relay.

Two weeks after the Atlanta Celebration, I was asked to go to New York City just before Christmas to help welcome the Olympic Flame to Rockefeller Center. The torch took a momentous march through the

streets of New York City, which were hit with chaos just three months before. The torch, that day more than ever, symbolized the strength and pride this country was built upon. I watched from underneath the great Christmas tree as Mayor Rudolph Guiliani carried the flame into Rockefeller Plaza, across the ice rink covered in candles, to a cauldron under the Christmas tree.

When I arrived in Salt Lake City this winter, I was ready to see all our hard work pay off. All of our planning was complete and the rehearsals were finished. The night before the games opened, I had the honor of holding the Olympic torch as it burned. This was the same flame that came from Greece - the one that I saw in Atlanta and New York. It was an honor that words fail to express. The next night, I sat in the stands of Rice Eccles Stadium as the Olympic Winter Games were opened. During the next two weeks, I was in charge of cast relations for the Olympic Cheerleading Squad and the OMP Fire and Ice Dancers. My job was more fun than anything else.

Finally it was time to bring the games to a close. The Olympic Games of Salt Lake City were some of the most amazing Olympics in history. At the Closing Ceremonies, I was honored to escort the flag bearer and captain of the bobsled team from Chinese Taipei, Chin San Chen, into the stadium. There is really nothing like working for the Olympic Games. The task is so unique in that the whole planet was our audience. I cherish every memory I have and all the friendships I made, especially Tracy, Sheri and Ted of the Ceremonies Department. This experience was absolutely incredible.

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