

# COMMUNITY

## Fort Myers chosen for Olympic art museum

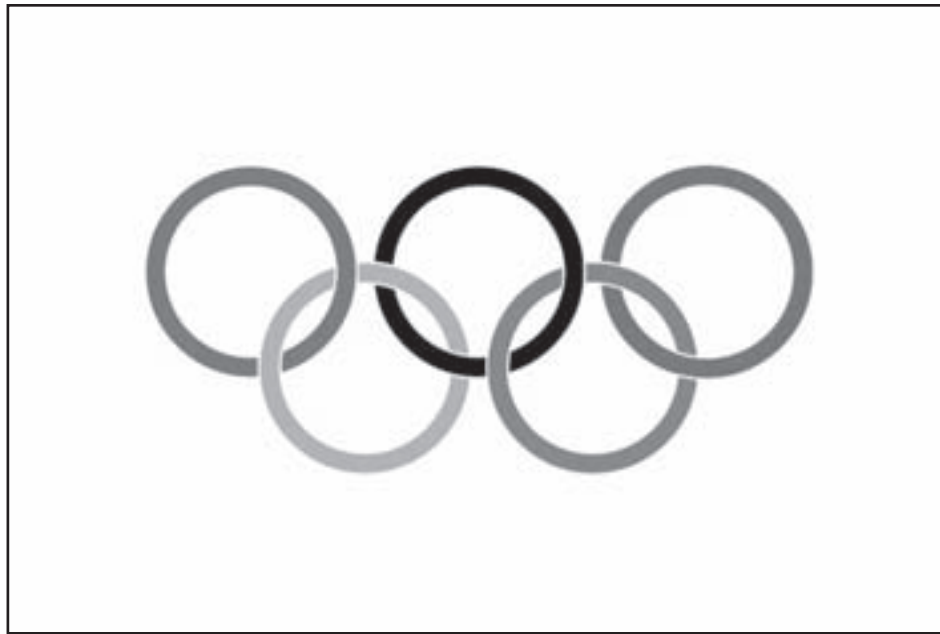
The Fort Myers River District is one step closer to becoming the world headquarters for "Art of the Olympians," a new, interactive museum and touring exhibition licensed by the U.S. Olympic Committee to showcase artwork by international Olympic athletes.

The headquarters' grand opening is expected in 2008, the same year as the Beijing Summer Olympics. With the licensing from the U.S. Olympic Committee, Fort Myers will become the only non-Olympic-host city in the nation to be able to fly the Olympic flag.

The Community Redevelopment Agency, comprised of Fort Myers City Council members, has unanimously recommended the headquarters be located in the city-owned City Pier building at 1300 Hendry Street in the Fort Myers River District. City officials currently are negotiating a lease with Art of the Olympians, which the Fort Myers City Council will then consider for final approval.

Art of the Olympians currently features sculpture, paintings, drawings and photography from 14 Olympian artists from seven countries including the United States, France, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Australia and Puerto Rico. The number of Olympians involved and the type of artwork included both are expected to grow. The Art of the Olympians exhibit was founded by four-time Olympic medalist Al Oerter and Olympian Liston Bochette, who served as World Olympians Association General Secretary. Both are Fort Myers residents.

### Only non-host city to fly Olympic flag



"We are so proud the Olympians have chosen Fort Myers as the home for this world headquarters and thankful for the opportunity to partner with them before an international audience," said Fort

Myers Mayor Jim Humphrey. "We look forward to Southwest Florida families visiting the museum in the near future. Once established, we anticipate it will draw tourists from around the world."

Oerter, a four-time Olympic Games Gold Medalist, is the only athlete to set four consecutive Olympic records. He won the Olympic Gold Medal in the discus during the 1956, 1960, 1964 and 1968 Olympics.

Bochette is a five-time Olympic Athlete in both the Summer and Winter Games. His accomplishments include the competing in the Decathlon in 1984 and participating in the Bobsleigh competition during the 1992, 1994 and 1998 Olympic Games.

Art of the Olympians premiered at the Alliance of the Arts in 2006 and traveled to New York City at the United Nations, the National Arts Club and the New York Athletic Club. The traveling exhibit is scheduled to travel to Monaco, Greece and Switzerland later this year.

Once the world headquarters is established in Fort Myers, Art of the Olympians officials anticipate having a standing exhibit in the headquarters, while featuring a traveling exhibit through worldwide destinations including their presence in both the Summer and Winter Olympic games.

In addition to Oerter and Bochette, Olympians who are displaying their work include Bob Beamon (U.S.), Jean-Blaise Evequoz (Switzerland), Rink Babka (U.S.), Kader Klouchi (France), Larry Young (U.S.), Cameron Myler (U.S.), Wojciech Zablocki (Poland), Allison Wagner (U.S.), Shane Gould (Australia), Roald Bradstock (United Kingdom) Joe Dube (U.S.) and others. ■

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