

## Herald of Peace

In ancient Greece, a truce was called before and during the Olympic games to assure safe passage for athletes and visitors to Olympia. Runners, called "heralds of peace," traveled through Greece announcing the beginning of the truce. Our modern-day Olympic Torch Relay stems from this ancient custom, and Falling Waters, W. Va., resident Richard A. Smith has taken his place as a Herald of Peace.

On Dec. 20, Richard had the honor of carrying the Olympic torch in Cumberland, Md., on a piece of its 46-state journey to Salt Lake City, along with longtime friend Nanci Cogswell who nominated him.

"Richard is my adopted stepfather. He has pulled me through a lot of rough times," said Nanci. "It was awesome when he passed the flame from his torch to mine."

Richard also called the experience awesome. "I carried the torch hoping to represent a peaceful type of relationship with the world. The Olympics ties the world together. If we can do it then, why can't we do it all the time?"

Bearing witness to peace is nothing new for Richard. In 1952, he was called out of his Brethren Volunteer Service assignment in Falfurrias, Texas, for induction into the military. When his draft board would not recognize his conscientious objector position, he refused to be inducted and was imprisoned, serving eight



Abbie Miller

months of an 18-month sentence.

Richard embodies the Olympic spirit of self-sacrifice and good will. An ordained Church of the Brethren minister, he served pastorates in the Denton, Md., and Johnson-town, W. Va., congregations, as well as 19 years as a juvenile probation officer. Now retired, Richard is a member of the Hagerstown, Md., congregation where he serves as spiritual mentor to Manchester College student Margo Miller.

Richard had saved up \$300 to purchase the Olympic torch he carried. But Margo, who is studying in Quito, Ecuador this year, related an experience to him that changed his mind. She had been stopped by two hungry young boys on the street who wanted to shine her shoes. As

tennis shoes don't shine well, she offered to buy them something to eat. With a board full of options at the restaurant, they simply asked for rice. Margo's reflections on the new meaning this experience gave to the phrase "Live simply, so that others may simply live" so impressed Smith that he decided to donate his \$300 to Christian Peacemaker Teams.

When fellow torchbearer Bev Hoffmaster, a member of the Martinsburg, W. Va., Church of the Brethren, learned of Smith's sacrifice, she told her sister, Brenda Spaulding, who initiated a collection among Smith's friends to purchase his torch for him. With or without his torch, one can be sure that Richard Smith will continue to be a Herald of Peace.—Peggy Reiff Miller

**Witnessing for peace,** *Richard Smith carries the Olympic torch in Cumberland, Md.*