**Sammy Lee—First Korean American Who Won An Olympic Gold Medal**

Trojan Sammy Lee was the first American-born athlete of Korean descent to win an Olympic gold medal. He was also the first man to win diving titles at two consecutive Olympics. At the 1948 Olympics in London, Lee won the platform event and placed third in the springboard competition. At the next Olympics in 1952 in Helsinki, Finland, he successfully defended his position on the platform.

Prior to his achievements at the Olympics, Lee won the US national title in both springboard and platform diving in 1942. The year 1942 was a turning point for Lee since he stopped competing and attended USC Medical School to earn his medical degree. Shortly after finishing his degree, he returned to diving and won the 1946 U.S. national platform title.

Later in 1953, Lee retired from competitive diving but remained involved with the sport while pursuing a career as a doctor. He coached the U.S. diving team in 1960 and Bob Webster to two gold medals, and he later coached American Greg Louganis to a silver medal in the platform event at the 1976 Olympics in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Lee was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame in 1990.

Apart from his athletic world and career in medicine, Lee made significant contributions to the Korean American community and the USC campus. In 1986, Lee helped establish the Korean Heritage Library, part of the USC Libraries, which currently houses the largest collection related to Korean American history in the country.

Passed away at age of 96 on Dec. 2, 2016, Lee was USC’s oldest living Olympian.

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