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## Olga Gyarmati Aczel Collection

ca.1948-1980

2 boxes (1 linear feet)

Call no.: MS 803



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Olga Gyarmati was one of the most successful and popular athletes in post-war Hungary. A multiple national champion in sprint and jumping events, Gyarmati represented her country in three Olympic games, winning gold in the inaugural women's long jump competition in 1948. Gyarmati fled Hungary with her husband, the novelist Tamas Aczel, during the 1956 revolution, eventually settling in Hadley, Mass., in 1966 when Tamas joined the faculty at UMass Amherst.

The Aczel collection includes a small quantity of material relating primarily to Olga Gyarmati's athletic career and particularly to her participation in the 1948 Olympics. Included are the gold medal awarded to her at the London games along with the printed

certificate; a silver box commemorating her victory, presented to her by the Hungarian Workers' Party; a scrapbook and two photograph albums; and a landscape painting done by Gyarmati in later life.

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## Background on Olga Gyarmati Aczel

Born in Debrecen on October 5, 1924, Olga Gyarmati became one of the most successful and popular athletes in post-war Hungary. A multi-talented sprinter and jumper, Gyarmati won 24 Hungarian titles in individual events (100m in 1941, 1949, and 1951; 200m in 1951-1952; 80m hurdles in 1948, 1949, 1951-1955); high jump in 1942 and 1949; long jump in 1948-1949, 1951-1956; and pentathlon 1950 and 1955), four titles in relay events, and she set 23 national records in six different events. On the international level, she won World University Games titles in long jump (1949) and 200 metres (1951), adding four silvers and two bronzes.

The pinnacle of Gyarmati's athletic success, however, came in the Olympics. Between 1948 and 1956, she represented her country three times in four events: the 100 and 200 meter dash, the long jump, and high jump. Going into the London games in 1948, Gyarmati was expected to do well in the sprint events, but was a decided underdog to world recorder holder Fanny Blankers-Koen in the long jump. After Blankers-Koen withdrew from long jump -- the first-ever Olympic women's long jump competition -- Gyarmati emerged as the surprise winner, jumping 5.695 meters. She was only the second Hungarian woman to win Olympic gold in track and field.

After marrying the renowned writer Tamas Aczel (his second marriage) and competing in the 1956 Olympics, Gyarmati and her husband fled during the Hungarian Revolution, settling first in England and later in the United States. Tamas Aczel joined the faculty at UMass Amherst in 1966. Tamas died in 1994, with Olga following on October 27, 2013.



Olga Gyarmati, 1948

## Scope of collection

The Aczel collection includes a small quantity of material relating primarily to Olga Gyarmati's athletic career and particularly to her participation in the 1948 Olympics. Included are the gold medal awarded to her at the London games along with the printed certificate; a silver box commemorating her victory, presented to her by the Hungarian Workers' Party; a scrapbook and two photograph albums; and a landscape painting done by Gyarmati in later life.

# Inventory

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Gyarmati, Olga: Athletic scrapbook

1948-1956

Includes newspaper and magazine clippings of Gyarmati and fellow competitors at the London games and later competitions.

Gyarmati, Olga: Diploma, Olympic games London

1948

Gyarmati, Olga: Photograph album (disbound)

1948-1956

Primarily images of Gyarmati and fellow competitors at the London Olympics and later competitions.

Gyarmati, Olga: Photograph album (disbound)

1948-1970

Photographs of Gyarmati, her family (including Tamas Aczel), and friends.

Gyarmati Olgá-nak / a XIV. Olimpián elért Bajnokságért / a Magyar Dolozok Pártja

1948

Silver box presented and inscribed to Gyarmati by the Hungarian Workers' Party commemorating her victory in the 1948 Olympic long jump; includes enamel decoration of Hungarian Communist flag.

Olympic gold medal

1948

Seraphic Mass Association for Capuchin Missions: Family enrollment certificate for Olga and Thomas Aczel

1987

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## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Gift of Maryellen Burnowski, Dec. 2013.

### Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Jan. 2014.

### Language:

English

### Copyright and Use (More information )

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## Search terms

### Subjects

Aczel, Tamas

Olympic athletes--Hungary

### Contributors

Aczel, Olga Gyarmati [\[main entry\]](#)

### Genres and formats

Medals

Photographs

Scrapbooks

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