

Turning the Tide - the story of an Australian Olympic champion

The story of one of Australia's greatest swimmers, during one of the most turbulent times in sporting history

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, March 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Against the backdrop of the Soviet

“

This is a story of how an individual's sporting perseverance and eventual triumph carries a much wider message for us all in how the human spirit can overcome adversity.”

Thomas Bach, OLY

Union's invasion of Afghanistan, the 1980 Moscow Olympics were always going to be political. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser wanted Australia's athletes to boycott the Games, in line with the USA, but many of the athletes had a different view and competed anyway.

But regardless of flag they competed under at Moscow, athletes were the victims - and most of them female.

According to Michelle Ford-Eriksson MBE, author of *Turning the Tide*, that struggle is still far from over. In this

gripping memoir, Michelle charts the highs and lows of a young girl with a dream, to the dizzying heights of the Olympics, swimming gold in the 800 metres – all while international politics spilled into sport like poison.

Raised in Sans Souci on Sydney's southern beaches and a student at St Georges Girls High School, Michelle gave notice of the champion she would become as the fastest 12-year-old in the world over 100m freestyle. The following year, she was the youngest member of the Australian Olympic Team to be selected to compete at the Montreal 1976 Olympic Games. At 15, Michelle broke her first world record in the 800m freestyle, only to break it again 16 days later with a time of 8 min 30.53 seconds. Two years later, in Moscow 1980, Michelle was the only non-Soviet Bloc female swimmer to win a gold medal in the pool, and Australia's only individual gold medallist across all sports, male or female. Australian female swimmers would not win another Olympic gold medal in the pool for 16 years, until Atlanta 1996.

The political backdrop of the Cold War era meant the Olympics became a battleground for ideological supremacy between East and West. The boycotts of the Moscow and Los Angeles Games symbolised the weaponisation of sport for political ends.

Athletes found themselves marginalised and voiceless in the face of administrative decisions and

state-sponsored doping programs.

In 1981, Michelle was the only Australian of the 25 athletes invited by IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, to join an elite group of Olympic gold medallists to represent all athletes at the Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden, Germany. Working alongside Thomas Bach and Sebastian Coe, Michelle helped represent athletes for the first time. This became a catalyst for change; with a call for more stringent doping controls, more opportunities for females on the field and in administration, and the creation of the IOC Athletes' Commission beckoning a new era for sport. *Turning the Tide* is more than a memoir; it serves as a testament to resilience in the face of adversity and a rallying cry for reform within the sporting community. As the Olympic Games continue to evolve and new host cities emerge, Michelle's hope is that the lessons gleaned from the past can inform meaningful discussions and drive positive change. In this roller-coaster account of courage and the enduring spirit of those who dared to challenge the status quo, *Turning the Tide* is a manifesto for a fairer, more equitable Olympic movement.

ENDS

'Turning the Tide' by Michelle Ford (with Craig Lord) is available in paperback and as an e-book from March 8th from [Fair Play Publishing](#), good bookstores, and online including Amazon.

Debbie McInnes

DMCPR Media

+61 412 818 071

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/692780583>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.