

{Purple Pride}

Olympic Purple and Gold

1977 Duke carries the Olympic torch BY MICHELLE HITE ('88)

Jim Pivarnik ('77M) of East Lansing, Mich., carried the 2010 Olympic torch for 400 meters in Strathmore, Alberta, Canada, on Jan. 19. Pivarnik is a professor of kinesiology and epidemiology at Michigan State University and president of the American College of Sports Medicine. He earned his master's in physical education from JMU in 1977.

Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. chose Pivarnik as one of 20 individuals to sponsor as torchbearers in the 2010 Winter Olympics torch relay. Coca-Cola's torchbearers were chosen because of the positive impact they have made in their communities.

"I was chosen by Coca-Cola because they are one of the corporate sponsors of the American College of Sports Medicine," says Pivarnik. "I carried the torch in the small town of Strathmore. It is just east of Calgary. It's a very charming community, and I am convinced



Watch a YouTube video of Jim Pavarnik ('77) carrying the Olympic torch on its way to Vancouver at www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlnshs9rWF4. And read more about his experience in the American College of Sports Medicine's e-newsletter *Sports Medicine Bulletin* at www.multibriefs.com/briefs/acsm/torchbearer.htm.

that everyone in the town came out to cheer us on — even all the schoolchildren who were let out of school to watch the torch relay. ... I was lucky to carry the torch an extra 100 meters. The standard torch run is 300 meters, but we had an extra 100 meters to fill on this part of the relay."

Pivarnik says that the experience was an emotional one. "It is hard to put into words, but I think I will loosely quote the person who gave us our pre-torch run instructions," he says. "Everyone in the world knows about the Olympics and what they mean. And everyone knows that before each Olympic Games the flame is transferred from Greece to the host country by thousands of torches. This year, that included 12,000 torches! For those 400 meters, I was the only person in the world responsible for doing this because the Olympic flame was on my torch. Just talking about this makes me emotional. It was such an honor." ❧

JMU alumni Twitter followers and Facebook fans were asked to share their craziest JMU connections, and the responses were incredible — reaching around the globe. Are you connected? Get involved in Madison conversations by following the JMU Alumni Association on Twitter at www.twitter.com/JMUAlumni or become a fan on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JMUAlumni.

JMU TWEETS INCLUDE:

@Kjmass1: I ran into some JMU alums at the lunch table at the mountaintop lodge at Vail, Colo., some 1,600 miles from home (D.C.).

@Gazerella: A parent of one of my students freaked out because I'm a JMU alum — her entire family went there and she was thrilled!

@dukelon07: In Fort Walton Beach, Fla., four other JMU alums live in the same apartment complex as me. GO DUKES!

JMU FACEBOOK FANS SAY:

Caitlin Slaughter: I was wearing a JMU sweatshirt while traveling home from Japan in the middle of Tokyo-Narita Airport. I heard someone yell "J-M-U DUUUUUUUUKES," and I ran into a fellow undergrad.

Shannon Kennan: When I voted in the 2008 presidential election here in Pennsylvania last November, one of the retirees volunteering at the check-in table started talking to me about JMU (I had on a sweatshirt). Turns out something like three of their four children went to JMU,

and now they have a granddaughter who goes there. Small world!

Heather Lee Duhart: I was backpacking in Bruges, Belgium, and ran into a fellow JMU alum.

Barbara Seaholm Antonetti: I was at Canyonlands National Park in Moab, Utah, saw some young guy with a truck with Virginia plates at one of the lookout points. We got to talking and we are both alums almost 20 years apart.

Cathy Walters: I was in San Francisco visiting some tourist sites with some Canadian friends when we were approached on Lombard Street by a couple to take their picture. Turned out that I knew him through friends in high school, and she went to JMU, two years behind me. What are the odds? My Canadian friends were amazed.

Justin Constantine: I joined the Marine Corps during law school and five years after JMU graduation. The guy in the bunk above me at Officer Candidate School had also attended JMU, and we had some mutual friends. ❧

