He was instrumental in the drive towards Olympic recognition for TWIF which will always be part of his legacy. He drove that process with a single mindset and objective that I have rarely seen or experienced since then.

Co was also instrumental in tug of war being included in the first World Games in 1981 in Santa Clara. A position and participation that we have enjoyed ever since, and with tug of war again being on the programme for WG’25, this legacy is also ongoing.

I joined the TWIF Exco in 1996 with Co as President. At that time he had already served in this position for a number of years - having been instrumental in structuring and strategically positioning and aligning TWIF’s development via a basic but effective strategic framework.

In essence we have retained this approach focusing on Fondness and many happy memories. That is how I recall my interaction with Co and Marleen over many years. Co was absolutely committed and passionate about his work within TWIF and also with the IWGA where he served as Secretary General.
the development and presentation of our sport, and on compliance with anti-doping, governance and financial reporting.

The financial nest egg that TWIF enjoys today, is testimony to his insight and vision during a time when the ‘dot.com’ era was booming - a short interlude of madness took place during which sporting bodies were chased by technology companies set on making a quick buck. With his quick thinking (and I would believe with my active support as Treasurer at the time!) we resisted the urge to become a big spender sport and managed to build up a viable reserve whilst many other sports spent the windfall as quickly as they could. We were proved right!

Yes, we did not always agree on everything and we had some tough discussions, debates and differences of opinion. In fact, we sometimes had totally divergent views. But with respect we always managed to find common ground while seeing the bigger picture. We took decisions - sometimes with compromises - and found a middle ground in the best interest of our sport. It was never personal and we could enjoy a beer or glass of wine afterwards without any ego's or personal grievances.

Co was not only a very competent administrator in TWIF and the IWGA, but he was absolutely and totally committed and passionate about what he did. Sometimes being a bit too focused on detail and prolonging processes and decisions to at least my frustration, but he was meticulous in his actions and preparations for TWIF meetings and events. He also spent many hours on the TWIF (and I think IWGA's too) archive digitizing documents of historic and special interest, including an electronic database of results of both TWIF Championships and World Games over the years.
Co was an electronic master and assisted in develop the first graphics and video’s on training and judging. He was also instrumental in the programming and development of the TWIF competition programme and accreditation platform we still use to a large extent today but which is now coming to the end of its useful life.

Co and Marleen also visited and stayed with us at our home on a number of times. I believe he managed to walk with bare feet on our lawn for the first time in our back yard during one of the first visits. An experience he managed to repeat a number of times and also taking great pleasure in basking in our South African sun. Starting in some spot in the morning with a book and ending the afternoon in a totally different spot “sunning” himself throughout the day.

He and Marleen virtually acted as grandparents to our children when they were still very small and they “volunteered” many a time to baby sit during their visits. I recall them playing this role during the Oceanic Championships in 1999 in Hartenbos (site of the 2026 World Championships in 2026) and during their various stays in Hermanus and elsewhere when we visited them during their extended stays in South Africa over the years.

I remember with great fondness some of the great times we spent in each others’ company “after hours”. When the serious matters of the day was done and we could relax and enjoy each others’ company with a good glass of wine, good food and a glass of brandy or whisky and smoking our pipes before bed time. Bed time was sometime fairly late with a short period of shut eye before the next day when serious matters had to be dealt with yet again! It was always serious work before play, but luckily with a good balance over time!

I believe we as the TWIF global family need to salute Co for his huge contribu-
tion to our sport over many-many years. We lost a great friend and statesman of our sport who have left an indelible footprint and legacy which will stand us in good stead for many years to come.

It is not a co-incidence that Co was the first recipient of a TWIF Honorary Life Presidency. He set the tone, the pace and an example that those that followed, and will follow in future, can merely try to emulate. He was one of a kind.

Dear Co – Rest in peace. I regard you both as a friend and mentor, my senior by many years. Thank you for the privilege to have worked - and played - with you for a long period of time. We will certainly miss you.

Dear Marleen, Megin, Arjen, Jules and Toots – we share your immense loss and pain in this period. Thank you for having shared Co with us. For allowing him to live out his passion in our sport.

Please be comforted with our collective acknowledgement and sincere condolences. He not only leaves a huge gap in you as a family, but he leaves an equally huge gap in our TWIF family of nations.

Anton Rabe
Ex-President

World Games 2001 Akita Japan from left to right: Co Koren, Glen Johnson, Tony Martin and Anton Rabe
Co Koren saying farewell to Peter Baker during TWIF Congress 1999 in Namibia
Co Koren giving instructions on the competition programme to the recorders during World Outdoor Championships 2010 Pretoria South Africa
Left: Co Koren during World Games Akita 2001, Japan