

Medal honors Owens

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WASHINGTON — President Bush, presenting a special Congressional Gold Medal to the widow of the late Jesse Owens yesterday, compared it to the Nobel Peace Prize given to former President Theodore Roosevelt.

Bush recalled that Owens' track triumph at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin "was an unrivaled athletic triumph, but more than that, it really was a triumph for all of humanity."

"The Berlin games were to be the showplace of Hitler's theories on the superiority of the (Aryan) master race until this 23-year-old kid named Jesse Owens dashed to victory in the 100, the 200 and the 400-meter relay," Bush said.

Those victories and his win in the broad jump made Owens the first Olympic competitor to win four gold medals. The fact that he was a black shattered Hitler's racial claims.



AP file photo

Jesse Owens

Bush showed Owens' widow, Ruth of Cleveland, the Nobel Peace medal in the White House's Theodore Roosevelt Room given for Roosevelt's contribution to world peace, helping end the Sino-Soviet War.

"This gold medal sends the same kind of a message," Bush said.

Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio (Cleveland), sponsored the legislation to strike a special medal honoring Owens.