

Praised by president

Owens runs 'last relay'

PHOENIX, Ariz. (AP) — "To me, life is like a relay," former Olympic gold medalist Jesse Owens once said.

"Each generation is like a leg of that relay. And if you teach your children well, they will pass on that baton of responsibility."

Monday, at the age of 66, Owens completed his leg of the "relay." The man whose life "symbolized the struggle against tyranny," and whose track ability 44 years ago showed a quiet grace to a world headed for war, died of lung cancer at the University of Arizona Medical Center in Tucson.

"Perhaps no athlete better symbolized the human struggle against tyranny, poverty and racial bigotry," President Carter said after learning of Owens' death. "His personal triumphs as a world-class athlete and record-holder were the prelude to a career devoted to helping others."

Gov. Bruce Babbitt of Arizona has

declared Wednesday as Jesse Owens Day, and has ordered flags flown at half staff. In addition, Owens' body will lie in state that day at the new Capitol Rotunda from 11 a.m. MST until 8 p.m., with Babbitt and other state officials participating in a 1 p.m. memorial prayer service.

Mourners were permitted to view the body today at Universal Memorial Center in Phoenix.

Owens' body will be flown to Chicago, probably Wednesday or Thursday, with services to be held at Rockefeller Chapel on the University of Chicago campus. The date and time for those services were not immediately known, however.

It was last December that doctors found that Owens, a Phoenix public relations executive, had adenocarcinoma, a lung cancer that normally is linked to cigarette smoking. Owens smoked an average of a pack of cigaret-

tes daily for 35 years.

James Cleveland "Jesse" Owens gained worldwide fame when he went to Berlin in 1936 to compete in the Olympic Games. Adolf Hitler planned to have the Games prove his theory of racial supremacy, but the 22-year-old Owens, the son of a black Alabama sharecropper, shattered those visions.

Owens believed that athletic competition was the answer to racial and political problems, and spoke against Carter's call for a U.S. boycott of this summer's Olympic Games in Moscow.

Politics should be kept out of the Olympics, said Owens of the president's planned protest of the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan.

"I would like to teach our young people that, yes, it's great to win, but I'd ask what are they going to win in life?" Owens once said in an interview.