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**TRACK LEGEND ZOLA BUDD NAMED SPOKESPERSON FOR THE
17TH ANNUAL KEEP LA RUNNING CHARITY 5K RUN/WALK, 10 K RUN**

- *1984 Collision With Mary Decker in Olympic 3000 Final Made Her Track's "Villain"*

Former track star Zola Budd (married Pieterse), who unwillingly caused one of the biggest dramas of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, will be the honorary spokesperson and starter of the 17th annual Keep LA Running Charity 5K Run / Walk, 10K Run, Kids Dash, Coastal Bike Ride, and Mayor's Mile, Sunday, July 11, at Dockweiler Beach in Playa del Rey. Zola will also run the 5K at the event.

Zola will also appear at the Keep L.A. Running booth to give out free running tips and pose for pictures at the LA Marathon Expo, March 20, from 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Born in South Africa in 1966, Zola revealed phenomenal talent at young age, breaking the world record in the 5000 meters before turning 18. Since her performance took place in apartheid South Africa, her record (15:01.83) wasn't recognized. Taking advantage of the fact that her father was British, Zola applied for a British passport in order to compete in the LA Olympics.

The buildup for the 3000 final was unprecedented, as American record holder Mary Decker (Slaney) had won both the 1500 and the 3000 meters at the 1983 inaugural World Championships in Helsinki. In all the hoopla around the anticipated Mary vs Zola duel, nobody seemed to notice that veteran Romanian Maricica Puica had ran the fastest 3000 meter of the year.

Zola's barefoot running and her lack of experience, along with Decker's inability to handle running in tight packs led to catastrophe. When Budd took the lead just past midpoint and, somewhat abruptly cut in front of Decker, the American bumped her twice then crashed on the infield, unable to resume the race. Booed by the packed Coliseum and herself shocked by what had happened, Zola faded to 7th place, while Puica ran away to win the gold. After the race, a IAAF jury found the Budd was not responsible for the collision, but for the American public Zola would unjustly remain "the villain" forever.

In 1985, still competing for Britain, Zola set a world record in the 5000 meters (14:48.07) and won the world cross country title, which she defended in 1986. She clocked fast times - **1500 m:** 3:59.96; **1 Mile:** 4:17.57 **3000 m:** 8:28.83 - but her career, hampered by injuries and a questionable suspension made her give up competition.

Following South Africa's readmission to the world's sporting scene, she competed for her homeland in the 3000 meters at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, but did not qualify for the final. In 1993, she finished fourth at the World Cross Country championships, but would never translate this form onto the track.

Zola and her family have been living in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, since 2008. She competes in Masters events, and her daughters Claudia, 17, and Lisa, 13, follow in her footsteps as distance runners.

Zola Budd Pieterse joins other track luminaries who have served as spokespersons for Keep LA Running – Carl Lewis, Billy Mills, Frank Shorter, Joan Benoit Samuelson, Mary Decker, Henry Rono, Steve Scott, Johnny Gray, Louie Zamperini.

Keep LA. Running, which has grown into one of the most popular distance running events in Southern California, has raised over \$800,000 for its beneficiary charities. Keep LA Running is a very special event, benefiting children with cancer, premature born babies and other worthy causes.

The event was initiated in 1994 by then SEIU Local 660 L.A. County/Special Districts Employees Emergency Disaster Relief Fund to provide a safety net for L.A. County employees. The Emergency Relief Fund is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit organization (EIN 95-4842244). As the event has grown in profile, popularity and funds generated, it has added new charities - the Pediatric Oncology Service, of Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center which treats children who have cancer, and the Harbor UCLA Medical Center Neonatal Ward, which treats premature born babies.

Last year Keep LA Running partnered with Rebuild Sylmar Long Term Recovery Committee to help victims of the November 2008 Sylmar fires. This year Keep LA Running will donate part of the proceeds to the victims of the devastating Haiti earthquake.

Keep L.A. Running races are open to everyone, from the serious runner to the first-time participant. Runners, walkers and bike riders can register online at www.keeperunning.com Competitors can also register by mail to: Keep L.A. Running, c/o Prime Time, PO Box 1009, Twin Peaks, CA 92391 by July 7. For registration information call race director Brennan Lindner at (310) 821-7898 or visit the event's website, www.keeperunning.com

Major sponsors of Keep L.A. Running include co-title sponsors, PacifiCare, Colonial Supplemental Insurance, Kaiser Permanente and American Income Life. Other top supporters include Trustmark, The Law Offices of Fensten & Gelber, Union Bank of California, Trustmark, Delta Dental, Benefit Vision, Aflac, Southern California Ford Dealers, Amalgamated Bank, and Lewis, Marenstein, Wicke and Sherwin. ###