



**By Carolyn Lee**  
**The Imperial Republican**

Runners from law enforcement agencies across the country paced through Imperial last Wednesday to celebrate the coming of the National Special Olympics to Lincoln this week. The national games on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus and around the city conclude on Friday.

The law enforcement participants, from states as far away as Ohio, New Jersey and Maryland and as near as Colorado, were to participate in the opening ceremony last Sunday.

According to one runner, a state trooper from Ohio, there were nine teams running in Nebraska prior to the olympics, each team consisting of about 25 runners.

The group that passed through Imperial last week included Antonio Williams of Oahu, Hawaii, a Chief of Police for the Department of the Army. He was a military policeman for 22 years before becoming a year round spokesman for the Special Olympics.

"I want to give back to the community. I have no greater passion than helping people," he told those attending a ceremony on the Chase County Courthouse lawn.

"We'll do whatever it takes to get the word spread across the nation," he said, to "run in solidarity to support what Eunice Kennedy Shriver started" with Special Olympics.

Carrying the torch with Williams was special olympian Ben Beavers of Long Island, N.Y.

"Special Olympics made me become a great person," he told the audience.

Beavers has competed in Special Olympics for years, he said, winning third place in the '99 World Games in the half marathon, fourth place in the 1500 meters and fourth place in the 3000 meter race at the '07 World Games in Shanghai, China.

His basketball team also took the gold in the Summer Games in New York in June.

Also speaking last Wednesday were Imperial Mayor Annie Longan, Chase County Sheriff Tim Sutherland and Imperial Police Chief Larry Browning.

Eunice Shriver planted the seed of Special Olympics by running a day camp in her home in 1962 for people with intellectual disabilities. The first Special Olympics games were held at Soldier Field in Chicago in 1968.

Shriver said, "You are the stars and the world is watching you.

"The right to play on any playing field? You have earned it. The right to study in any school? You have earned it. The right to hold a job? You have earned it."

Shriver died in 2009, but Special Olympics carries on.