



**HARRY JEROME**  
**The Fastest Man on Earth**

**Educators' Guide**

THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA





An Educators' Guide to

# HARRY JEROME

## The Fastest Man on Earth

Never, ever give up

Ileana Petrobruno, 2011, 10 min

Based on the feature documentary ***Mighty Jerome***, written and directed by Charles Officer.

### Learning Areas

Language Arts  
Social Responsibility

### Grade Levels

4–6

### Themes

Heroism, Leadership, Community Building

### Keywords

Heroism, racism, perseverance, commitment, bravery, human rights

### Learning Goals

To think critically about heroism; to recognize that everyone has the ability to become an everyday hero; to create a vision of a healthy community—this entails setting goals, reflecting on learning and using applied knowledge.

### About the Film

Canadian Harry Jerome overcame racism to reach the heights of track-and-field success. When an injury threatened to end his career, Jerome trained diligently and went on to achieve one of the greatest comebacks in sports history.

Made especially for elementary and middle-school classes, this film features two young students who guide us through Jerome's life, the challenges he faced and his legacy—which includes the Harry Jerome International Track Classic, an event that brings together youth and adults in a celebration of track and youth fitness.

### About the Filmmaker

Ileana Petrobruno has produced, directed, written and edited several short films and the features *Girlfriend Experience*, *Girl King* and *Cat Swallows Parakeet and Speaks!* Her films have won awards and screened at hundreds of festivals, including the Berlin International Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival. Ileana recently completed the online children's series *Pets and Their Kids*.



## Facts about Harry Jerome

(Born September 30, 1940 – Died December 7, 1982)

- Bronze Medal winner, Men's 100 metres, 1964 Summer Olympics, Tokyo
- Gold Medal winner, Men's 100 metres, 1967 Pan American Games, Winnipeg
- Gold Medal winner, Men's 100 yards, 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games
- He competed for Canada in the 1960, 1964 and 1968 Summer Olympics.
- The 1960 world record "tie" by Jerome was hand-timed (as all events were prior to electronic timing, which began in 1972) at 9.90 seconds at the Canadian Olympic trials held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, but track officials refused to believe the time, so it was rounded up to 10.0 seconds to match the previous month's world record set by Armin Hary (Germany).
- Jerome is the only athlete to own both the 100-yard and 100-metre world record simultaneously.
- From 1963 to 1966 he held or equalled four world records concurrently.
- He continued to sprint successfully until the late 1960s, despite suffering an injury so severe at the Perth Commonwealth Games in 1962 that doctors initially believed he would never walk again.

## Harry's World Records

100 metres	<b>10.0 sec</b>	1960
100 yards	<b>9.2 sec</b>	1960
440 relay	<b>40.0 sec</b>	1964
60 yards	<b>6.0 sec</b>	1964
100 yards	<b>9.1 sec</b>	1966

## Tributes

There are several events and buildings named in Harry's honour, and he has also received numerous special awards.

- In 1967, he was inducted into the Canadian Amateur Athletic Hall of Fame.
- In 1970, he was named an Officer of the Order of Canada.
- In 1971, he was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.
- Since 1982, the Black Business and Professional Association has held the annual Harry Jerome Awards, a national awards dinner for Canada's black community.
- Since 1984, the international track and field meet at Swangard Stadium, Burnaby, BC, has been called the Harry Jerome International Track Classic.
- The Harry Jerome Sports Complex in North Vancouver is one block away from North Vancouver High School, where Harry first went out for track in 1958.
- The Harry Jerome Sports Centre is located in Burnaby, BC.
- There is a bronze statue of Harry Jerome in Stanley Park, Vancouver, BC.
- The University of Oregon's weight room is named after Harry, as is the Harry Jerome Track in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.
- In 2001, Harry Jerome was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame.
- In 2010, he was designated a Person of National Historic Significance by the Government of Canada.



## Lesson Ideas

These lesson ideas are designed to be completed sequentially, though with some minor amendments educators could use them as stand-alone lessons.

The structure of the following lesson ideas are based on the Heroes Live Here <[http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/heroes\\_live\\_here/](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/heroes_live_here/)> model developed by 2010 Legacies Now and the Province of British Columbia.

## Discover

### Activity 1: Recipe for a Hero

Before showing students the film, provide them with five or six sticky notes and ask them to write down characteristics of a hero (one characteristic per sticky note). Pair the students together and have them discuss why they selected these words. Collect all the sticky notes and post them on a wall where they can be read. Facilitate a class discussion about the most commonly selected characteristics and then tell the students that these will be some of the ingredients in their “recipe for a hero.” Ask your students to write their own recipe.

#### **Sample Recipe for a Hero from a BC member of 4-H:**

- 1 ordinary person
- 1 cup of passion
- 1 dash of bravery
- 1 handful of goals
- 4 cups kindness
- 1 message
- Mix together with a splash of positivity. Knead in choices with the mix, then bake in an oven of intelligence.

After screening the film, have your students use the Think-Pair-Share strategy (see, for example, <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/strats/think/>) to compare the characteristics of Harry Jerome with those listed in their recipe for a hero.

## Celebrate

### Activity 2: Everyday Heroes Presentation

Ask your students to consider applying their recipes to people in their own lives. Who do they know that fits their recipe for a hero? Discuss as a class who might be considered an everyday hero.

As a research and presentation project, have your students identify an everyday hero. In order to inspire passion and authenticity, ask your students to think about what their interests are, and then to consider people involved in those interests as potential heroes. For example, if a student is interested in hockey, is there a local team member that would fit their recipe for a hero? Students will present their hero to the class using a creative presentation style of their choice—video interview, multimedia presentation, storybook format, etc.



## Act

### Activity 3: Guided Visioning Activity, Community Engagement

Provide a definition of “community” and facilitate a brief class discussion about how your students’ everyday heroes fit in to their community. Then guide your students through the following visioning activity:

1. Close your eyes, and take a deep breath. Imagine your community.
2. Visualize the strengths of your community. What is good about your community?
3. Perhaps you have some concerns about your community—that’s ok. Imagine your ideal vision of your community, in which all your concerns have been addressed.
4. In your ideal vision, what would your community be like? What would it feel like? What would you hear, see, etc.?
5. Take a moment to look around at your ideal vision of your community.
6. Now...open your eyes and imagine that you have the opportunity to give three ideas to local leaders about how to make your vision a reality. What advice would you give to your community leaders? (Provide some time here for your students to think about this and write down notes if they like—then share with the class.)
7. Guess what? YOU are the leaders in your community! What commitment could you make to help your community vision become a reality? How could your everyday hero help you achieve this commitment, or vice versa? (Have your students write a pledge to do one thing to improve their community, either with the help of their everyday hero or on their own.)

For examples of other Heroes Live Here projects, please visit:

[http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/heroes\\_live\\_here\\_youth\\_gallery/](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/heroes_live_here_youth_gallery/)

### **Other Questions/Themes to Consider**

- Heroism, racism, perseverance, commitment, bravery, human rights—what do these words mean in the context of the film *Harry Jerome: The Fastest Man on Earth*? For example, using the word “commitment,” draw comparisons to Harry’s sport, his cause, or his community.
- Harry loved to run and he set some goals to help pursue this passion. What do your students like? Have them set some goals—encourage them to “dream it, plan it, do it.”
- Examine Harry Jerome’s impressive record to demonstrate just how fast he really was. For example, a few students could volunteer to run/walk/bike 100 metres while being timed, to see how their speed compares to Harry’s record of 10 seconds.



## Simple Activity Using Hero Quotes

"Sometimes great heroism happens in everyday life. In the tiny, courageous choices it takes just to get through a day. To help someone in need. To lift someone's spirits. To give someone a hand—or a hug." —*The Hero's Trail: A Guide for a Heroic Life* by T.A. Barron.

Ask your students the following:

"What courageous choices did Harry make throughout his lifetime? What courageous choices do you make every day? How can peer pressure work against making courageous choices? What happens when we choose the less courageous path?"

Now ask your students which of the quotes listed below they like most, and why.

These quotes can be posted in the classroom to help inspire the students throughout learning activities.

## Hero Quotes

*True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others, at whatever cost.*

**Arthur Ashe**, Winner of three Grand Slam tennis tournaments

*Society needs heroes to rejuvenate, re-energize and renew itself with visions of the possible. That's what heroes do.*

**Roberta Bondar**, First Canadian woman in space, photographer, environmentalist, author

*Some people strengthen society just by being the kind of people that they are.*

**John W. Gardner**, American politician and author

*Never doubt that a small group of concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

**Margaret Mead**, Cultural anthropologist

*Everywhere life is full of heroism.*

From "Desiderata" by **Max Ehrmann**, Author and poet

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

**Anne Frank**, Author and hero

*Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not.*

**Oprah Winfrey**, TV personality



*Heroes take journeys, confront dragons, and discover the treasure of their true selves.*

**Carol Lynn Pearson**, Author, poet and screenwriter

*Nurture your mind with great thoughts; to believe in the heroic makes heroes.*

**Benjamin Disraeli**, Former British Prime Minister

*Self-trust is the essence of heroism.*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**, Essayist and poet

*I am of certain convinced that the greatest heroes are those who do their duty in the daily grind of domestic affairs whilst the world whirls as a maddening dreidel.*

**Florence Nightingale**, Nurse and author

*Life, misfortunes, isolation, abandonment, poverty, are battlefields which have their heroes; obscure heroes, sometimes, greater than the illustrious heroes.*

From *Les Misérables* by **Victor Hugo**, Author

*The hero is one who kindles a great light in the world, who sets up blazing torches in the dark streets of life for men to see by.*

**Felix Adler**, Educator and social reformer

*It takes courage for people to listen to their own goodness and act on it.*

**Pablo Casals**, Cellist and conductor

*All we can ask in our lives is that perhaps we can make a little difference in someone else's.*

**Lillian Davis**, Community activist

*Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.*

**William James**, Psychologist and philosopher



## Additional Resources

- **BC Sports Hall of Fame – Hero In You:** Harry Jerome page – Educational resources including video interviews, articles, facts and photographs:  
<http://www.heroinyou.ca/content/Student%20Area/Module2/L3%20Harry%20Jerome.asp>
- **My Hero Project** – A site where young people across the globe can submit films or other media projects inspired by their heroes: <http://www.myhero.com/go/films/>
- **The Hero's Trail: A Guide for a Heroic Life** – A book by T.A. Barron that describes various types of heroes.
- **Canadian Olympic Committee** – Information about Canadian athletes from the organization responsible for all aspects of Canada's involvement in the Olympic Movement:  
<http://www.olympic.ca/en/athletes/>
- **Canadian Olympic School Program** – Olympian stories, activities, movement skills, podcasts, case studies and project packs: <http://www.olympicschool.ca>
- **It's the Real Deal: Paralympic Schools Program** – Lessons plans, supplementary student activities, and a "teachers only" discussion board: <http://www.paralympiceducation.ca>
- **The Paralympic Heroes Program** – Coordinates Paralympic athlete visits across Canada:  
<http://www.paralympic.ca/en/Programs/Paralympic-Heroes.html>
- **Hero Cat** – A book by Eileen Spinelli and Jo Ellen McAllister Stammen about a heroic cat.
- **Perfect Man** – A book by Troy Wilson and Dean Griffiths about superheroes and everyday life.



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