

Jenner Olympic torch fetches \$24,000 at auction

By Ula Ilnytzky, AP

NEW YORK – The 1984 Summer Olympic Torch that Bruce Jenner carried through Lake Tahoe sold for just less than \$24,000 at an auction of sports memorabilia Thursday.

The 24-inch Olympic torch was the first major piece of Jenner memorabilia to go to auction since the winner of the 1976 Olympic Decathlon Gold Medal became Caitlyn Jenner. It had a presale estimate of \$20,000.

The seller was Bob Lorsch, a Los Angeles philanthropist and entrepreneur who orchestrated the Tahoe leg of the torch relay and secured Jenner's participation.

"This torch serves as a wonderful symbol that masculinity and femininity are not mutually exclusive," said Chris Ivy, director of sports auctions at the Dallas-based auction house. "The decathlon has long been considered the ultimate athletic proving ground. Jenner has played both gender roles masterfully."

Jenner was approached to carry the torch as part of the Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games to help support Caesars Tahoe's agenda of giving back to the local community and promoting area youth programs, Lorsch said. The hotel casino held a drawing for a chance to win a place in the relay and sponsored 50 kilometers, or about 31 miles, of the Nevada route. Seven kilometers went to individuals and 42 to local organizations. Jenner was asked to run the remaining kilometer.

"Caesars saw it as a tremendous opportunity ... to do something more special, never realizing that we would be creating what is truly a piece of history that originated as a piece of

sports history, then evolved as a piece of entertainment history through the Kardashian legacy and becoming a cultural phenomenon through the transition to Caitlyn,” Lorsch said.

Better known to a younger generation as the patriarch on TV’s “Keeping up With the Kardashians,” Jenner announced earlier this year that he was transitioning to become a woman.

The torch, which was purchased by an anonymous Midwest collector, was among the highlights of the auction held by Heritage Auctions in Chicago.