



# Sports Hall of Fame

## INAUGURAL INDUCTION BANQUET

**EVENING PROGRAM**

**Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**Vancouver Island Conference Centre**



# Sports Hall of Fame

The Nanaimo Sports Hall of Fame acknowledges and thanks our generous sponsors



# A Message from the Premier



September 20, 2008

## *A Message from the Premier*

As Premier of the Province of British Columbia, I am very pleased to welcome everyone gathered here tonight to celebrate, and to congratulate the first group of inductees to the Nanaimo Sports Hall of Fame.

This is truly a day to celebrate in Nanaimo, as the Sports Hall of Fame, part of the Port of Nanaimo Conference Centre and Museum, hosts its inaugural dinner and induction ceremony. Sport and active living play an important part in the development of healthy communities, and this facility will highlight the rich history and diversity of sport in the Nanaimo area.

As we prepare to host the world at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver and Whistler, facilities like this one are an excellent way for British Columbians to celebrate our athletes and volunteers for their efforts and to recognize them for the contributions that they have made to their communities as leaders and role models to younger generations.

I would like to acknowledge the volunteers, community groups, planners and local officials at all levels of government who worked together to make this facility become a reality. I understand that a Sports Hall of Fame for the Nanaimo area was a dream for many years. Your perseverance and commitment in bringing this project to fruition is a true testament to the passion and community spirit for which Nanaimo has become so well known.

Again, congratulations to the inductees, and please accept my best wishes for a memorable evening.

Sincerely,

Gordon Campbell  
Premier



[www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

## A Message from the Mayor

2008-AUG-28



Congratulations!

On behalf of Council and the citizens of Nanaimo, I would like to congratulate all the 2008 inductees to our Sports Hall of Fame. The Sports Hall of Fame is a wonderful addition to both the Nanaimo Museum and to our community. This recognition of our rich sporting history is long overdue.

Tonight is a very special event for our community as we celebrate the induction of the first 10 people and teams. I encourage everyone to come down and view this great Hall of Fame in the lobby of the new Museum.

I would like to thank the volunteers that have worked for many years to secure this facility to celebrate sports in Nanaimo. Thank you to the Museum Board of Directors and staff for making the dream of many a reality in their new home as they take the lead in the Hall's development and growth in the future. Congratulations to the Sports Hall of Fame Committee and the Selection Panel for their hours of volunteer time.

As we enjoy this inaugural induction banquet this evening, we can all look forward to this annual celebration of the sporting achievements of our fellow Nanaimolites.

Sincerely,



Gary Korpan  
MAYOR

# INAUGURAL INDUCTION BANQUET

WELCOME to the Inaugural 2008 Induction Ceremony and Banquet for the Sports Hall of Fame at the new Nanaimo Museum.

Thanks to the generous financial support from the City of Nanaimo, which built this beautiful new convention facility you are presently enjoying, the Nanaimo & District Museum Society now has the space and resources to house the Sports Hall of Fame.

The dream of a sports hall of fame in Nanaimo has been nurtured for more than 20 years. It was given a boost in 2004 with the conception of the new museum as well as a fund raising drive augmented by a financial contribution from the BC Games Legacy Fund.

In January of this year, with the new museum well under construction, a call for nominations was put out to the region to find the first 10 inductees for the new Sports Hall of Fame. That call brought in more than 50 nominations.

Thanks to the efforts of museum Board and staff, the SHOF Committee and selection panel, Nanaimo City Council, numerous sponsors and many volunteers, we are here tonight to honour and celebrate the special achievements of our best and brightest athletes.

As you leave here tonight, head to the museum lobby to see the new Sports Hall of Fame Wall if you haven't already seen it. If you know of an athlete or team that is worthy of the being an inductee, the next call for nominations will be January, 2009. Museum staff can assist you with any questions you may have.

On behalf of the Nanaimo Museum and the Sports Hall of Fame, we would like to congratulate and thank all of the inductees for their invaluable contributions to sports, for entertaining us so well and for teaching us how to reach for the stars.

## Honouring the Nanaimo Sports Hall of Fame's 2008 Inductees

**1914 Northfield Violets, Pioneer – Soccer**

**1923 Nanaimo FC Wanderers, Pioneer – Soccer**

**Hugh (Red) Thomson, Olympian 1936, Pioneer – Mile Runner**

**Larry Thomas, Media**

**F. Elwood Wylie, Builder**

**Harry R. Wipper, Builder**

**Phil Olsen, Olympian 1976, Athlete – Javelin**

**Gerald Kazanowski, Olympian 1984 & 1988, Athlete – Basketball**

**Brenda Taylor, Olympian 1988 & 1992, Athlete – Rowing**

**1956 IWA Nanaimo Timbermen, Team – Lacrosse**



## 1914 Northfield Violets – Pioneer – Soccer

**THE NORTHFIELD VIOLETS** are representative of the dozens of community football teams that were so avidly supported by the many small coal-mining communities that existed in the early years of settlement on central Vancouver Island. In 1913, Northfield was a distinct community from nearby Nanaimo and was centered around the corner of the Bowen and Northfield roads on the wagon road from Nanaimo to Wellington. Today, both Northfield and Wellington along with other outlying small mining hubs such as Harewood, Chase River, and East Wellington are all well integrated neighborhoods within the greater City of Nanaimo. But back then, there were strong rivalries amongst these communities, and the fiercest rivalry was on the football pitch.

In many respects, Nanaimo can consider itself as the birthplace of organized football (soccer) in British Columbia. The B.C. Senior Football Association was first formed in Nanaimo in 1890 and the Nanaimo Challenge Cup was recognized for much of this period as emblematic of the Provincial Championship with teams from Nanaimo winning this championship on several occasions.

"In 1906 there was established a trophy competition that was intended to be emblematic of an all-Canada championship. The Peoples Shield was donated by a popular London newspaper. Though at first it was only competed for by western provinces, in its short history the Shield served to advance the idea of a Dominion Championship and provided the incentive for an inter-provincial competition in a manner not previously undertaken."

The Story of Soccer in Canada. Colin Jose and William Rannie

In 1913 the huge trophy was put up for challengers. With sweeping changes being brought about by military action, it was largely a local competition but the Northfield Violets prevailed and gained possession of the coveted Shield emblematic of the "Canadian Championship". According to Dave Unwin's 100 Year History of Vancouver Island Soccer 1886-1996:

"That series ended the original attempt at a Canadian Championship and the Shield vanished. Nearly 30 years later the battered trophy was found being used to block the weather in a broken back porch window. Badly checked, the restored trophy now has a distinguished resting place in the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame."

The Northfield Violets team members included: B. Clawthorne, W. Blythe, W. Sheperd, H. Zaccarella, G. Green, J. Clark, G. Grant, B. Leach, A. Young, J. Dixon, J. Wallace, T. Ollerton, J. Leckie, and A. Russell. ■



## 1923 Nanaimo FC Wanderers – Pioneer – Soccer

**IN THE EARLY 1920's**, the British Columbia Football Association finally became a member of the Dominion of Canada FA which had been formed in 1912. As a result, our province joined in the competition for the National Challenge Trophy (The Connaught Cup) emblematic of a true national championship.

In those days most of the finals were played at Carruthers Park in Winnipeg, the halfway point across the country. The Challenge Cup Final being a major date on the national sporting calendar and rating considerable coverage in every newspaper across the country.

Nanaimo's long journey to the National Championship began with a hard-fought three game series against arch rivals, Ladysmith FC, that ended on June 14<sup>th</sup> with Wanderers declared "Island Champions" on an overtime goal headed in by Alex Fowler. On July



17<sup>th</sup> the team left for Calgary by train where they defeated a team from Coleman, Alberta in two straight games by the scores of 2-1 and 3-1. Next stop was Winnipeg for the Western final where they defeated the Fort Rouge team in front of 4,000 fans 2-1 on goals by Fowler and Appleby and then held on with a nil-nil draw in the second game of the series. Meanwhile a strong CPR team from Montreal was working its way west to challenge the Nanaimo team in the final after defeating the Fort William War Vets.

The Connaught Cup final went to three 1-0 games. Nanaimo took the first game but lost the services of their lightning fast leftwinger, Bobby Husband. C.P.R. won the second match-up before Nanaimo came back to take the rubber match when Alex Fowler again found the net off a cross from Dickinson.

"It was the most thrilling match staged here for years, and no question about the best team winning. Nanaimo was stronger in every department except goal and their custodian had a holiday in comparison to Nicol in the Montreal nets, who gave the most wonderful exhibition of goalkeeping ever seen in the west. At times it bordered on the miraculous, and at the finish he received a great ovation from the 1,500 fans who gamely braved the elements."  
*(Account of the Game..., The Nanaimo Free Press, August 13, 1923)*

The downtown streets of Nanaimo were closed as the mayors of both Nanaimo and Ladysmith lead the crowd that greeted the return of the Canadian Champions. After disembarking from the Princess Patricia, the Island soccer heroes were paraded through the town to celebrate the first Connaught Cup victory for the West Coast.

The Nanaimo players included: D. Minto, T. Dickinson, J. McDougall, J. Hine, G. Linn, A. Fowler, T. Routledge, W. Bell, J. Hughes, R. Zaccarelli, W. Brown, E. Appleby, R. Husband, A. McMillan and, future Canadian Soccer Hall of Famer, Richard "Dickie" Stobbart. ■



## Hugh (Red) Thomson

Olympian 1936  
Pioneer – Mile Runner

**HUGH THOMPSON** was born in 1915 and was raised in Nanaimo by his Aunt and Uncle, Jack and Margaret Thomson. While growing up in Nanaimo, Hugh, affectionately known as Red, attended the John Shaw School where he developed an interest in track and field. Through his developmental years, he was coached by Angus Niven and became a popular and well known athlete who was active in track and field meets and specialized in the mile event.

In June of 1936, Hugh began his Olympic quest in earnest by winning both the mile and the half-mile events in Victoria before 1,500

people at McDonald Park. Soon thereafter, Hugh won the B.C. Mile Championship at a Dominion Day meet in Vancouver that qualified him to participate in the Canadian Olympic trials. To help pay for his way to Montreal, Mayor Pete Maffeo convened a working committee to raise money from the community. The City marked its confidence in Hugh by raising \$350 to send him on his way. Based on his performance in Montreal Hugh was selected for the Olympic Team headed for Berlin.

At the Olympics, Hugh was the youngest competitor in the 1,500 meter event. While he bettered the Canadian record at this distance in the elimination heat, he finished 9th and did not qualify for the final.

The Nanaimo Free Press described Hugh as the sort of athlete to set an example for youth by clean living, strict and hard training and perseverance. After his return from Berlin Hugh held exercise classes for budding athletes in appreciation of the people in Nanaimo.

A few years later Hugh was to enter the British Empire Games held in Australia but had the misfortune of breaking his leg and was unable to attend.

After war was declared, Hugh went over to England and joined the R.A.F. At the age of 28, he was killed in an airplane accident fighting for his country. ■



## Larry Thomas

### Media

**NOT MANY BROADCASTERS** begin and end their careers at the same station, but Larry Thomas was one of the lucky ones to be able to do just that. After graduating from Sprott Shaw Radio School in Vancouver Larry began his career at CHUB in Nanaimo in 1951. At that time CHUB was a 1,000 –Watt station running out of the Malaspina Hotel. Larry was a go-getter and took on just about everything there was to do in radio.

Although his first stop at CHUB was short lived, he would be back. After stints at CJVI in Victoria and various newspapers he returned to Nanaimo as a reporter and photographer for the Vancouver Sun's Nanaimo Bureau. Larry soon found his way back to CHUB in 1966 where he became the news/sports director. Larry's love of sports was obvious having grown up playing hockey, golf, motorcycling curling and fishing. Larry remained news/sports director until 1980. During this tenure he was awarded the prestigious RTNDA award in 1978.

Larry was a huge promoter of local teams becoming the first play-by-play voice of the Nanaimo Clippers and the Nanaimo Bathtub races. Later he became the voice of the Timbermen lacrosse team. He loved Nanaimo because it was a true sports community year round. From hockey to soccer to marine sports and tournaments, he provided listeners with as much accurate, local sports coverage as possible.

Equal to his love of sports was his love of his community. Larry was a dedicated volunteer. He was a director of the Central Island Radio Aid Association, Newcastle Island Society, and City Center Association and was chosen as the Empire Day Parade Marshal in 1990. In 1989 Larry was recognized at CHUB'S 40th anniversary for his achievements in broadcast journalism and for being such a dominant force in our community. He served as a City Councillor from 1993 through '96.

In an address it was stated that " every community should be so fortunate as to have a Larry Thomas who is not only vitally interested in all Nanaimo activities, but also gives so generously of his time and talent to further them."

In 1982 Larry returned to CHUB after a two-year communications position with the RCMP Nanaimo Detachment, hosting 'Open Mike'. During Open Mike, Larry interviewed Prime Ministers, authors, actors, and athletes and even covered Royal Tours.

Larry always seemed to have a smile on his face and energy to spare. He was devoted to his lovely wife Audrey and their children and grandchildren.

He was the "voice of Nanaimo" ■



## F. Elwood Wylie

### Builder

**WHILE ELWOOD WAS ALIVE**, there were very few people in the community who did not know him, especially those involved with minor sports. Anyone who met Elwood quickly came to appreciate him as a personal friend, a friend to sports, and a friend to the community.

He has been called “Mr. Track and Field” For 16 years, Elwood served as president of the Nanaimo Track and Field Club. He provided dedicated leadership and expertise and he was instrumental in developing the club into one of the best-equipped and financially stable track organizations in the province. In so doing, he allowed the club to make track and field participation available to an increasing number of youngsters in the Nanaimo area.

Hundreds of young athletes in this city have benefited from the selfless efforts of Elwood Wylie. The track was his second home, and he was always on hand to offer support, to oversee training by

the coaching staff, or to encourage young athletes during competition. He could be tough and demanding. What caring coach isn't at times? It was always with the aim of helping someone improve themselves. But Elwood's sense of humor was never far from the surface. Seen from across the track infield, Elwood could appear stern, but up close, his open and natural friendliness was unmistakable. To the athletes who passed through the Nanaimo Track and Field Club, he was a father figure in the best sense of the term. Or to some, a grandfather figure – as was suggested by the affectionate nickname "Grumpa". But if the kids on the track were Elwood's "children", then the track itself was definitely his "baby". He was the man who spearheaded the development of what is now called the Rotary Bowl complex. It was Elwood's vision to provide Nanaimo athletes with a first-class training venue and to give the citizens of Nanaimo a community facility of which to be proud. Over ten years, a disintegrating cinder track behind NDSS was transformed into one of the best all-weather track and field facilities in Western Canada – complete with change rooms, meeting rooms, concession area and covered grandstands. Elwood devoted thousands of hours to this project. He organized fund-raising, arranged volunteer labor, enlisted support of individuals as well as the Kiwanis and Rotary clubs. The Rotary Bowl complex is part of Elwood's ongoing legacy to our community. Elwood Wylie never sought the limelight. He was not interested in receiving personal recognition of his efforts. For him the reward was in helping others, quietly and without fanfare.

Too often we forget to thank such people. Fortunately a group of his friends made Elwood's contributions known, which resulted in him being awarded a "Celebration 88" medal. It was an honor richly deserved, and it was accepted with typical modesty. In coaching young athletes, Elwood taught that winning a race isn't the most important thing. Instead, he stressed that trying your hardest i.e. "giving your all" is what counts. ■



## Harry R. Wipper

### Builder

**HARRY R. WIPPER** was born in St. Catharines, Ontario and earned a B.Sc degree from McGill University in Quebec.

In his youth Harry participated and excelled at many sports and at the age of 14 won the award for school male athlete of the year. Harry's involvement in lacrosse, as a player, spanned seven provincial and five Canadian championship teams, winning his teams MVP trophy twice.

In 1956 he was recruited to Nanaimo to be the playing coach of the Nanaimo Timberman. Because of his excellent planning and leadership skills in sport and recreation he was hired by the City of Nanaimo in 1958 as the Manager of Civic Properties and Rec-



recreation. The position involved managing the Civic Arena and the community's sport and recreation programs and by 1960 also included parks and civic facilities.

Over the 31 years of Harry's career, he worked with City Council, community service clubs and sport organizations to help build the infrastructure for sport in Nanaimo.

The facility developments included many sports fields, field houses and tennis courts such as Elaine Hamilton Park, Robins Park and May/Bennett Pioneer Park. His visionary and planning skills were evident in the innovative plans he developed for many facilities. Harry's greatest pride is Bowen Park which today stands as a jewel of Nanaimo combining sport, social and nature activities. The Kin Pool opened in 1965 and the Bowen Complex was opened in 1967.

Harry's tenure as the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Nanaimo, provided the opportunity for the growth of athletics in this community. A park in the north end of Nanaimo was dedicated in his name and the plaque at that park reads "The Director of Parks and Recreation is recognized for his creative parks planning, development of facilities and programs and his loyal and dedicated leadership over the past 31 years"

Harry believed that sport and recreation should be fun and enjoyable and whenever possible a family affair. His family was always his main interest. He and his wife Sharon, who passed away in 2002, raised four children. Today Harry continues to live in the Nanaimo area where he enjoys traveling with Shirley and the many visits from his six grandchildren. ■



## Phil Olsen

Olympian 1976  
Athlete – Javelin

**ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED** track and field athletes in Canada, Phil Olsen still holds numerous provincial and national records in the javelin.

Phil's career began in 1970 in Nanaimo, while he attended Woodlands Secondary School. His meteoric rise started in 1973 with a gold medal performance at the Canada Summer Games in Burnaby. Phil broke a world junior record and was named the most outstanding athlete of the Canada Games. That same year, Phil also won the prestigious Viscount Alexander award for being the outstanding junior athlete in Canada.

In 1974 as a grade 11 student, Phil won the BC high school javelin gold medal with a record throw that still stands today. Upon graduation from high school Phil was recruited by The University of

Tennessee, one of the elite track and field programs in the US. During his brilliant four-year career at university, Phil was a four-time All South Eastern Conference performer and four-time All-American. His college highlight was his NCAA gold medal championship performance in 1976.

Phil represented Canada on the international stage while attending Tennessee. As eleven times Canadian champion, Phil represented Canada at many international events. At the Montreal Olympics in 1976 Phil's preliminary and qualifying throw of over 89 meters put him in the top three of the 37 competitors. He placed 11th in the finals the following day but at the age of 19 much more was to come.

Following his senior season at Tennessee Phil represented Canada at the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton. His gold performance solidified his stature as one of the worlds best javelin throwers. Queen Elizabeth presented Phil with his gold medal. Only the boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics stopped Phil from possibly winning an Olympic medal. As the number three-ranked javelin thrower in the world at that time, Phil had a legitimate chance of winning an Olympic medal.

Phil would go on to compete at the 1982 Commonwealth Games, placing fourth. Only an injury to his right shoulder prevented him from competing at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. He officially retired from the sport he loved in August of 1985.

In 1994 a panel of Canadian sports writers named Phil the greatest javelin thrower in Canadian history. Nanaimo is fortunate to have such an outstanding and dedicated athlete as Phil Olsen. ■



## Gerald Kazanowski

Olympian 1984 & 1988  
Athlete – Basketball

**GROWING UP IN NANAIMO,** Gerald Kazanowski was like many young boys, interested in playing sports, lots of sports. He loved playing with his brothers, Greg and John and loved the lessons athletics taught him.

As a two-time Olympian, 10-year National Team veteran and 8-year professional basketball player, Gerald has had many great coaches, teammates and mentors. He credits Don Sherry, his principal at Harwood Elementary School, for early inspiration saying, “Don was very supportive of athletics at our school and encouraged me to pursue my sport.” Gerald started playing at grade six on Mr. Wright’s team. “At the junior level Jack Arnold harnessed my brothers and my desire to win and compete. Next, my high school coach John Levering was instrumental. He introduced me to goal setting...first to win the provincial champions and then he said I should think about playing in the Olympics. He instilled a little seed into a shy kid.”

It didn't take long for the 6'9" centre to parlay his athletic passion into results on the basketball court. Playing for Nanaimo District Secondary School, Gerald was named BC High School Championship MVP in '78 and BC High School Athlete of the Year that same year. With his leadership on the court NDSS was ranked No 1 in Canada in '78 in High School Basketball.

In '79 Gerald started his illustrious University career in Victoria, shining as an outstanding CIAU athlete. As a member of the UVic Vikings Gerald won 4 Canadian National University Championships, was named All Canadian 3- times and was a 2- time recipient of the Premier's Athletic Award. Upon graduating in 1983 with a degree in Economics, Gerald was drafted in the 7th round of the NBA draft by the Utah Jazz.

It was in 79 he first began wearing the red and white, representing Canada at the World Juniors and becoming a carded athlete, a rank he would keep through 1992. During his international career, Gerald represented Canada at two Olympics (1984 and 1988), three FIBA World Championships, three World University Games and other world competitions.

As a member of the Canadian Men's National Team, Gerald was instrumental in some of our country's most memorable performances, including a fourth place finish at the '84 Olympics in Los Angeles and a 6th place finish at the Games in Seoul, Korea. In 1983 Gerald was a starter on Team Canada at the World University Games. Canada defeated Team USA which featured such greats as NBA stars, Charles Barkley and Karl Malone, en route to winning the gold medal.

Gerald's professional career took him around the world. He played for clubs in Spain, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Argentina and Mexico.

Gerald lives in Sydney with his wife Claudia and two daughters, Sarah and Grace. He loves the life lessons sports have taught him and is proud to have represented Canada. He says a sports career has a short shelf life and you have to be prepared for life after. By focusing on what sport teaches you, it can be a smooth transition. When speaking to young athletes, Gerald talks of goal setting and the importance of a great attitude as well as playing for the fun of the game. It's about looking at the big picture he says. With his generous capacity to give back to his community through volunteering, his focus on his family and his life lessons learned through sport, Gerald Kazanowski is definitely focusing on the Big Picture. ■



## Brenda Taylor

Olympian 1988 & 1992  
Athlete – Rowing

**IT WAS OUTSIDE**, on the water, and physically demanding: after growing up riding horses, Brenda Taylor, went to University and found rowing, competing for the UBC Thunderbirds from 1982-1985, and then the Canadian National Team from 1985-1992.

After some frustrating early years, Brenda had a fresh start in 1989 when Al Morrow was named Head Coach of the women's program. Together Al and a small core of athletes created a training environment where Brenda thrived. The athletes were a hard-working, competitive group, who strived for technical excellence. The Canadians became known for their toughness and speed over the last 500m of a race, strengths Brenda attributes to the training sessions on Lake Fanshawe in London, Ontario.

At the 1991 World Championships the four of Kirsten Barnes, Brenda Taylor, Jessica Monroe and Jennifer Walinga won Canada's first ever gold medal in heavyweight women's rowing. The next day they combined with the gold medal pair, Kathleen Heddle and

Marnie McBean, rowers Kelly Mahon and Megan Delahanty, and coxswain Lesley Thompson to win the eight. The Canadian women had won four gold medals and was the top ranked women's rowing team in the world. The four had posted the world's fastest time, which stood for 15 years.

After re-earning their seats in the boat in 1992, the team left for Europe in May (only a week after Brenda married rower Keith Battersby). In three pre-Olympic regattas across Europe, the Canadian four won all 11 of their races. But three weeks before the Olympics, stroke Jen Walinga injured her back. Despite rehabilitative efforts Jen was forced to withdraw, calling on spare Kay Worthington to take her place.

Determination is a word that comes up frequently when talking to Brenda. With less than ideal preparation heading into the Olympic competition, the team refused to give up. Brenda realized then that "Perfect preparation for the Olympics almost never happens. Everyone sitting on the start line has had her own challenges to overcome. It was how we handled those challenges that really mattered and would determine who won." Flying on adrenaline, the 4 were ready to race, and race they did....winning their heat and going on to win their first Olympic gold medal. The next day, Brenda and her teammates decisively won their second gold medal in the 8+. Brenda Taylor became one of the only 38 Canadians to be a multiple gold medal winner at an Olympic Games.

Growing up in Nanaimo established a solid foundation for Brenda's athletic success. Her parents, Fred and Madge Taylor, encouraged her to always try her hardest and do her best. Her older sisters, Heather and Jenny, modelled hard work and determination and Brenda strived to keep up with them. Tom Krall, principal at Departure Bay Elementary School, introduced Brenda to the joy of physical activity. The Nanaimo Pony Club provided the opportunity to compete and excel in a friendly, supportive and encouraging environment.

Brenda lives in Sidney with her husband Keith and two children, Piper and Finn. She still enjoys rowing in Elk Lake. ■



## 1956 Nanaimo Timbermen – Team – Lacrosse

**THE ROAD TO THE MANN CUP** began in 1951 when the Nanaimo Native Sons began playing in the Senior Western Lacrosse League. The team was composed of local players who had become a power house in provincial Senior B competition.

In 1955 the team changed its name to the IWA Timbermen, thanks to the efforts of the team executive including president Doug Rafter, Dr. Jim Senini, Ken Medland and Tony Pogi.

Playing their home games out of the Civic Arena many fans came out to support the team. Spud Morelli, Dave Patterson, Fred Fulla and Joe White developed a strong team nucleus with Alf Shuker, Clem Linford, George Potts, Terry Rodway and Donn Sherry moving up from Senior B to join them.

To further strengthen the team, management had brought in Bud Dumont, Bob Raffle, Lisle Scott and Gogi Stewart from Vancouver area teams.



Nanaimo also scouted eastern teams. Don Ashbee came west to play hockey in Victoria and Nanaimo persuaded him to play lacrosse. Derry Davies was signed from St. Catharines. Arnie Dugan, Bob Allen and Harry Wipper came over from Peterborough with Harry taking on the role as playing coach that year.

During the 1956 season, the Timbermen won 24 of 30 regular season games. Bob Allen had 127 points, including 89 goals for a new league record, with Donn Sherry contributing 102 points and Don Ashbee 91.

In the Western finals, the Timbermen took on the Vancouver Burrards and won the series in four straight games although each of the games were very tough and two went into overtime.

The next step in their quest for the Mann Cup was to take on Eastern Champion Peterborough. In anticipation of large crowds Maple Leaf Gardens was booked for the finals. The games were broadcast by Jim Robson through CHUB radio station on a delay back to enthusiastic Nanaimo supporters.

The Timbermen won the first three games two of which went into overtime. During the second game, playing coach Wipper tore ligaments in his knee and was forced to miss the rest of the series. Peterborough took the fourth game 14-7. However the Timbermen would not be denied and won the fifth game by a score of 8-7. Bob Allen was the high scorer of the series and Derry Davies won tournament MVP.

Nanaimo Timbermen became the first Western team to win the Mann Cup back east.

A happy and boisterous team boarded the plane for their return trip to Nanaimo. Upon return, they were greeted by thousands of fans lining Commercial Street as they paraded the Mann Cup through town. A civic reception was held at the Plaza Hotel and the team's feat has been the pride of Nanaimo ever since.

In 2006, City Council sponsored a 50 year reception for the team that is the pride of Nanaimo. ■

## Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony Program

- 5:30 pm      Doors Open to Sport Hall of Fame Cocktail Party  
and Banquet  
Music by the Steve Jones Trio
- 6:00 pm      Sports Hall of Fame Inductee Procession
- 6:30 pm      Guests take their seats  
Welcoming remarks by Master of Ceremonies'  
**Dave Bakes** and **Merv Unger**  
Welcome to Snuneymuxw Traditional Territory  
by **Dr. Ellen White**  
Welcome by the BC Minister of Healthy Living and  
Sport **Mary Polak**  
Welcome by Mayor **Gary Korpan**
- 6:45 pm      Dinner served
- 7:30 pm      Brief History of the Sports Hall of Fame by **Dave Bakes**  
Introduction of Special Guest Speaker **Mr. Jim Robson**
- 8:00 pm      Official Sports Hall of Fame Inductee Ceremony
- 8:50 pm      Roberto Luongo autographed jersey auction
- 9:00 pm      Closing Remarks  
(Please feel free to exit the building through the  
Museum to view the Sport Hall of Fame Induction Wall)



## Jim Robson

### Special Guest Speaker

**TO BRITISH COLUMBIANS**, Jim Robson is the voice of hockey. His familiar voice carried over the airwaves of KKNW for over two decades, bringing the latest triumphs and tragedies of the Vancouver Canucks to a generation of Canadians. In 1998 he was inducted into the BC Hockey Hall of Fame.

Jim Robson's 47-year career in broadcasting encompassed over 2,000 NHL games on radio and television, four Stanley Cup Finals, and televised Play by Play in five NHL All Star games for Hockey Night in Canada. He can also boast that he never missed a broadcast due to illness.

Robson was only 17 when he walked into CJAV in Port Alberni to pursue a career in radio. He moved to Vancouver in 1956 to CKWX where he remained for 14 years and then moved to KKNW, his home for the next 24 years. During his career in sports broadcasting, he demonstrated versatility and ease with a range of sports including baseball, football, high school basketball and track & field, and golf, but his passion was focused on hockey.

With Robson, listeners followed the progress of ice hockey in Vancouver. Wherever the team went, he was there, from the last game played at the Vancouver Forum to the first game at the Pacific Coliseum and subsequently, the team's move to General Motors Place. He also brought hockey fever home with his broadcast of the first NHL games in Edmonton and Calgary for Hockey Night in Canada, not to mention his work for Hockey Play by Play for CBC, BCTV, VTV and CTV Sports Net.

In 1992 he was named in the media section of the Hockey Hall of Fame. Robson retired in April 1999. His five decades of work are a testament to his life-long dedication to his craft. ■

## Nanaimo Museum Board

John Manning - Chair  
Joyce Brookbank  
Bruno Dragani  
Rob Fletcher  
Moirra Jenkins  
Shirley Lance  
Geraldine Manson  
Eveline O'Rourke  
Douglas Peterson  
John Ruttan

## Sports Hall of Fame Committee

John Manning - Chair  
Bill Bestwick  
Dave Bakes  
Tom Hickey  
Shirley Lance  
Merv Unger  
Eleanor Whyte  
Philip Wolf  
Mitch Wright

## Sports Hall of Fame Selection Panel

Jim Kipp - Chair  
Wayne Bianchin  
Les Malbon  
Tony Mayor  
Norman Thibault  
Ian Thorpe  
Eleanor Whyte  
Allan Young

## Nanaimo Museum Staff

Debbie Trueman, General Manager  
David Hill-Turner, Curator  
Richard Slingerland, Asst. Curator/Exhibit Designer  
Bobbi Williamson, Program/Volunteer Coordinator  
Arvon Brunt, Administrative Assistant  
Darrell Bell, Building/Data Base Maintenance  
Buddy Williams and Alex Brennan, Exhibit Preparators  
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# NANAIMO MUSEUM

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