

Jack Moon: 2013's Hockey Heritage recipient

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

For those who don't believe that Pittsburgh Penguins' superstar Sidney Crosby nearly became a Georgetown Jr. A Raider a decade ago, 2013's Hockey Heritage Award recipient can verify the story.

"We convinced him to play in Georgetown. You can ask Sidney that today. Why he didn't come to Georgetown was because he couldn't get a release from his minor hockey organization (in Nova Scotia), so he went to play for Shattuck-St. Mary's," said the now 63-year-old Moon.

"As soon as you saw him on

championships and drew well was to entice local products to stay at home and play.

Moon took over a Jr. A Raider team in 1998 that hadn't enjoyed a winning season in six years. He re-hired Jay Anderson as coach and improved the club's win total to 27 from six in 1997-98, going on to post five straight winning seasons with a .634 winning percentage (147-81-19) until he resigned in 2003.

"Jack was a stabilizing force in the organization," said Anderson. "He was a father figure, but he was the boss and didn't take any crap. Before we got there, there had always been internal politics in the executive that affected the team and Jack settled all that down."

Moon returned to help out with the Raiders in the 2004-05 campaign as they hosted and won the Dudley-Hewitt Cup Central Canadian championship, but a harrowing bout with bladder cancer that began in 2006 has prevented him from returning to the coldness of an arena.

"That first year was really fun because all Jay and I were asked to do was compete and get as many Georgetown kids back as we could from other teams," said Moon, referring to players such as Mike Knoepfli, Curtis Carr, Ryan Busby, Brydon Butterworth, Peter Veltman and Brampton's Stace Page.

"We figured that every local boy who played on the team was worth 50 people in the stands with friends, relatives and school buddies coming to the games. The Raiders had always recruited from Jr. C, when it should have been minor hockey players they were after. That's where the talent comes from. My goal when I got to the Raiders was number one, to be competitive, and number two, do whatever we could as a team to assist the boys to get to another level, whether that meant university hockey in Canada or a school in the U.S. and I think we did very well that way."

the ice, you knew this was Wayne Gretzky or Bobby Orr all over again. He was too good at 14 to keep playing midget and too young to be in the Q and he was only going to get bigger and better. That was a really fun weekend. TSN (The Sports Network) was following us wherever we went."

And while Moon was able to help recruit star talent from across Canada and even as far away as Russia (future NHLer Stanislav Chistov), he said one of the keys to building successful Jr. A Raider teams that won division

A native of Desoronto, Ont., Moon played rep hockey in nearby Napanee and took a liking to the coaching methods of the rink manager, Walt Geroux, who enjoyed success as the demanding bench boss of area senior and intermediate teams.

He was a referee at the Jr. B level and in what is now the Ontario Hockey League level from 1969-71 until work commitments took him to Montreal for a couple of years, eventually settling in Georgetown in 1989 with wife Debbie, daughter Tracey and sons Mike and John.

A year later, Moon found himself behind the bench of a Georgetown minor bantam AA team, an

Chris Goodhew to help us and that's when it started."

Several league, regional and Ontario championships would follow in the 1990s. Moon said the highlight was the 1996-97 minor atom AA Raiders' run to the OMHA title, defeating Richmond Hill in a fifth-and-deciding game while also breaking a nine-year drought for GMHA teams.

"It's not just me who gets this (Hockey Heritage) award. I wasn't the guy on the ice putting the puck in the net or stopping a shot. I've always said it's the same in hockey as it is in business. You surround yourself with good people and good things happen."

Moon laments that he'd still



Former Georgetown Jr. A Raiders' general manager Jack Moon is this year's recipient of the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award. Now 63, Moon also enjoyed success with several Georgetown minor hockey teams as head coach during the 1990s.

Photo by Eamonn Maher



Then Georgetown Raiders' head coach Randy Novak helps 14-year-old future NHL superstar Sidney Crosby try on the team's jacket during the Cole Harbour, N.S. native's visit to Halton Hills in 2002. The general manager at the time, 2013 Hockey Heritage Award recipient Jack Moon, said that Crosby would have signed with the Raiders but wasn't able to get his release and ended up playing high school hockey in Minnesota.

File photo

"interim" position he planned to only take for one season.

"Bob Craig and I were sitting in the stands watching our sons, who were both goalies trying out for the team, and we noticed there wasn't a coach on the ice," Moon recalled.

"(Longtime late Georgetown Minor Hockey Association president) Hal Pells happened to come over to us and said, 'Guys, if we don't find a coach, we won't have a team.' So we stepped up and got

like to be involved with junior hockey in some respect if not for his previous bout with cancer.

Although cancer-free for six years now, the sales executive for a Mississauga flooring distribution company has directed his energy towards helping those diagnosed with the disease in the Bladder Cancer Canada, an organization he co-founded in Sept. 2009. He remains as president of the organization, which drew 1,400 participants over 14 locations across Canada for its annual Awareness Walk in September, which raised \$400,000.

"There's as much work with (BCC) as there was being GM of a Jr. A hockey team," he noted.

"That's my focus now. I'm proud and amazed at what we've accomplished in such a short time."

Hockey Heritage Dinner
Monday, March 3 at the Acton Legion 7 p.m.
Special guest speaker Ray Ferraro of TSN.
Tickets are \$65 each.
For more info call 905-877-6710.