

HOCKEY HERITAGE 2012

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Local hockey folks take a Cotton to Neil



By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Holding court in front of the audience at the Acton Legion Monday night, the retired teacher in 2012 Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award recipient Neil Cotton made an appearance.

"This evening my lecture is about people," said the 65-year-old longtime science teacher at Georgetown District High School.

"Hockey is just a game and the most important thing I take from playing all sports, but hockey in particular, is the quality of the people you meet along the way."

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A skyscraping, rugged presence on the blue line (and sometimes centreman) for four Georgetown Raider clubs that won Ontario Hockey Association Intermediate A championships, Cotton also stepped forward to rescue the Raiders from folding in 1976 when the executive quit en masse.

Serving as president/captain of the team in 1976-77, Cotton guided the Raiders to the Eastern Canadian Championships in Campbellton, N.B., where they were bounced in the national semifinals. The Toronto native retired from the Raiders in 1978 but helped put in place an organization that went on to win the Hardy Cup title in 1982.

Cotton went on to become a power skating instructor with the Town of Halton Hills and a coach with the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association for five years at various age levels.

He also had a 15-year stint as head coach of the GDHS Rebels.

"What a ride it's been," the accomplished musician added before taking out his acoustic guitar to perform a song called *Children of the Ice*.

"My theme is people, not the game. We are never in this alone in this the greatest game, hockey. It is a team effort. Who ever heard of singles' hockey?"

Neil Cotton received a congratulatory kiss from his granddaughter Bronwyn following Monday's Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award dinner held at the Acton Legion. Cotton, a longtime player and coach, was recognized for his dedication to the sport.

Photo by Ted Brown

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