

# HOCKEY HERITAGE

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## Gary Stone's youth hockey achievements celebrated

By Eamonn Maher  
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The 2016 Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award recipient, long-time coach and executive member Gary Stone, was feted for his nearly four decades of dedication to minor hockey at the Acton Legion on Monday evening.

More than 300 people attended the 39th-annual event, which included special guests Canadian 2010 Olympic gold medalist Tessa Bonhomme, former Montreal Canadiens Gilbert Dionne, Canadiens property, goaltender Michael McNiven of Georgetown and

the Stanley Cup along with one of its keepers, Mike Bolt of the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Stone, a father of four whose family was intimately involved with the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association as well, guided many championship teams in both house league and rep, while also working within the organization to help establish a house league goalie clinic and served as a convenor for various age groups.

As well, he coached a girls' hockey team for a couple of years.

I have to thank everybody here. I never expected this. I'm just a guy hanging around the boards. That's all I know. It's outstanding, but that being said, one of my greatest rewards was just being able to train the kids over all the years, said the tool-and-die maker, who has worked for Georgetown resident Max Pruffer's company in Brampton for the past 33 years.

Stone employed what some would call unorthodox tactics and drills, including renting the miniature ice pad at the Acton Arena for full practices while other coaches looked on in astonishment.

In his early rep years, the energetic bench boss would switch his goaltenders while the play was on-going, drawing the ire of an Oakville coach who after the game said, he'd punch me in the nose if Stone tried to do it again.

Stone thanked his mentors within the GMHA, such as late long-time president Hal Pells, for helping him understand that other



This year's Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award recipient, Gary Stone, gets congratulatory kisses from wife Leanne and daughter Tracy following Monday night's ceremony at the Acton Legion.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

people may not like what you like.

Another highlight came when the local minor hockey community rallied around the Stone family when then 12-year-old daughter Terri had to undergo bone-marrow transplant surgery at Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. A hair-cutting fundraiser was organized, raising more than \$20,000 for cancer research.

I've had a chance to work with some of

the greats, the Newfoundland native noted.

Some of Stone's best memories were during the four years he coached a group of novice and atom AA players born in 1995 that included 2013 Dallas Stars first-round pick Jason Dickinson, future OHLers Jacob Harris and Darren Raddysh and Liam Clare of Sacred Heart University.

His son Tom also played on the team and wife Leanne was the manager.



Halton Hills Minor Hockey Association president Bill Curry presents Hockey Heritage Award recipient Gary Stone with a congratulatory gift.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

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