

2017 Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award: Sheila Campbell

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Sheila Campbell is the 2017 Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award recipient, completing a family hat trick of sorts.

Her father, Jim Ford, received the award in 1993 and sister Geraldine Hardcastle was the honouree in 2011.

Basically from the time I could walk I was in the arena because dad helped with the minor hockey, the Legion house league I think it was, said Campbell.

The four of us girls would always go to the arena with him and I think it was more to give mom a break than anything. We always went down to the rink on a Saturday night to watch the Raiders from the time we were small. We grew up around hockey in the fall and winter and fast-pitch in the spring and summer.

The 56-year-old Campbell continued her community involvement on the executive board of Georgetown Minor Hockey Association long before her son Bill began playing and well after he moved on.

She became known for helping out several organizations at the same time the Jr. A Raiders, minor lacrosse, the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Council and the Halton Hills Sports Museum among others.

Sometimes I'd be knocking on your door wearing a hat for three different organizations, she laughed.

Until we finally got more organized and a director of sponsorship was found, and then that became your job.

Fellow Hockey Heritage recipient Charlie Hanman, then head coach of the community-owned-and-operated Jr. A Raiders in 1991, asked Campbell to join the execu-

tive and her tasks included assisting Elaine Lewis in the Booster Club and mailing out draw tickets with Linda Veltman and Norma Hancock to fans who'd entered the team's popular annual car raffles orchestrated by team president Finn Poulstrup.

Her job description was a moving target, overseeing the 50/50 draws (often surpassing \$2,000 for the winner's share) and the admission table. She and husband Joe would also sometimes find newly acquired, out-of-town hockey players unexpectedly at their front door, needing to be billeted.

I never even got to watch the home games, except for maybe five minutes in the third period after the 50/50 was done and before all the money was counted and put away, she added.

Later, under the dictatorship of Raiders general manager Jack Moon, Campbell was asked to organize the club's end-of-season banquet with little money to spend, so she became the caterer, recruiting girlfriends to help, while peeling potatoes and cooking the roast herself.

Jack was pretty good at dictating. He'd come up with wonderful ideas and then I'd have to somehow find ways to fulfill them, said Campbell, who served as the team's secretary for several years.

We pretty well lost every game but the stands were full and that was the most important thing. Back then, a lot of local kids played on the team and that was why I did what I did. You got to know the parents well and we did go to watch all of the road games.

Campbell volunteered with the Raiders until 2006 when family and work commitments didn't leave enough time in the day for hockey anymore.

On the minor hockey front, she joined the GMHA executive in 1994



Sheila Campbell's roles with various hockey organizations in Halton Hills usually involved behind-the-scenes work but she did get to watch home games of the Jr. A Raiders for a few minutes in the third period. Campbell joins father Jim and sister Geraldine as Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award recipients. Photo by Eamonn Maher

after years as a supporter and assumed the monumental task of reviewing its constitution and drafting a set of by-laws to bring the organization into line with the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.

That was a big job. A lot of weekends, a lot of typing. We had a computer, but it didn't do what it does now, said Campbell, who fondly remembers GMHA executive meetings with the late Gary Louth, Harry Bottoms and Gerry Perkins.

Drawing up the by-laws and writing them involved a lot of arguing as well. (HHMHA past president) Carson (Mininch) and (late GMHA president) Hal Pells always had their strong opinions. Most of the time they agreed, but it still meant a lot of typing for me and the meetings would go on for hours.

Campbell found that the fellow rink rats she hung around with as kids became her best friends as adults and being part of the lo-

cal hockey community was just natural, even if the volunteer jobs weren't always glamorous.

The International Bantam Tournament held in March was one of the biggest events in Ontario and Campbell recalls one year showing up at Memorial Arena for 6 a.m. on a Saturday to discover that no other volunteers were there to help.

I had to first register the teams, check the game sheets and then rush down to operate the time clock, worrying about getting the drinks down to the rooms after the game, then cleaning the rooms up, she said.

All of the executive was up at the Alcott Arena and when I called the office there nobody would answer. Just a disaster. I was so exhausted at the end of the day.

She was also one of the founders of Best of the Best Thanksgiving Classic rep tournament and in 2002 undertook the hosting of the OMHA Foundation's visit to Georgetown for two years, allowing underprivileged children to participate in the sport.

There were some really special memories from volunteering for that because the kids were so excited to get out and play, she said.

Campbell received the Jim Mackie Award in 1993, 1997 and 2001 for her volunteering in minor hockey and she was the recipient of the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Citation Award in 2010.

(Volunteering) was more in my blood than for just doing it because my son was involved, she said. At one point there was a core of about eight of us on the board who didn't have kids playing, but we all still did it because it was what you enjoyed doing, right?

The 40th-annual Hockey Heritage Award Dinner will be held Monday, March 6 at the Acton Legion. Tickets are \$75 each. For more info call 905-877-6710.

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