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# Sports & Leisure

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Friday, November 30, 2001

## Hockey Heritage honours Dave Kentner with milestone award

Throughout his entire minor hockey career, Dave Kentner scored just one goal.

Kentner also had one goal in mind when he pulled together five of what he considered to be Georgetown's hockey legends for a meeting. And just like when he was breaking in alone on the goaltender as a member of the Hershey Bears of the Little NHL, Kentner aimed high.

His goal was to preserve Georgetown's hockey history by honouring those who created it. So as the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award reaches its 25th anniversary, it's only fitting that Kentner is the recipient of the award that he helped create in 1977.

Today even Kentner is surprised by what the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award has become and the spinoffs it has spawned:

- One of the longest running old-timers hockey tournaments
- Beaumont Cup exhibition games
- Hockey Heritage Citation Awards
- Donations of more than \$150,000 to local charities
- An award dinner that sells out months in advance

"At the beginning I had no idea it would grow to this," he said. "There are just so many things other than just the award. But within two or three years we knew we had really conceived something very important to the hockey community."

The Hockey Heritage Council has also "reactivated" many long time volunteers who thought their hockey days were over. And that has served to promote what Kentner calls the living heritage.

"Whenever you bring hockey people together, they talk about hockey and tell stories and that's how history gets passed on. That's an important part of what we do."

As a player who skated more on his ankles than his blades, Kentner didn't anticipate becoming part of the Georgetown's hockey history. He grew up in awe of the Raiders. As an eight-year-old, he and neighbour Don Tuck would go directly to Memorial Arena to lay claim to seats four hours before the opening faceoff.

"As a young kid in the 1950s, you didn't get to watch the National Hockey League," he said, "so the Raiders were the stars to us."

It was Raider players such as Del Beaumont, Roy Ward and Gerry and Blake Inglis that Kentner would pretend



Dave Kentner, one of the founders of the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award, has been named this year's winner of the award. The local hockey community will honour Kentner March 4. Photo by Herb Garbutt

to be as he played on the backyard rink built by his father Claude.

But in 1972, Kentner finally became a Raider when he was asked to join the team's executive by president Wilf Brownlow.

"I didn't tell them I would have cut off my right hand to join," Kentner said.

He started out by selling tickets to win a hamper of groceries at games. He then helped the team produce its first program and began working his way through the ranks, eventually becoming the vice-president of hockey operations, which encompassed the GM duties, in 1980.

By the time the 1981/82 season

began, the Raiders had enhanced their reputation as an Ontario powerhouse, winning five OHA titles and going to the finals three other times.

Kentner would scan *The Hockey News* looking for players who had dropped out of the minor league ranks and try to recruit them for the Raiders. Kentner and coach Gerry Inglis coaxed goalie Wayne Wood and defenceman Jack Smith out of retirement just before the roster cutoff date.

The Raiders would go on to win their sixth Ontario title by defeating Timmins and then eliminate Thunder Bay and Cap Pele, N.B. They capped their long quest for the Hardy Cup, the Canadian

intermediate championship, by sweeping Quesnel, B.C. in three games in front of the Georgetown fans.

Kentner gives most of the credit for the victory to Inglis.

"Gerry Inglis was the reason we won. He was one of the finest OHA coaches. He could see someone skate around the ice and instantly tell if he was a player." But Kentner said the Raiders also had the best organization from top to bottom— from the ticket sellers, fund-raisers and booster club, to the fans to the sponsors who supported the team.

In the celebration following the Hardy Cup victory, Kentner told *The Georgetown Independent*, "It's time to retire. I'm out of hockey."

Not quite. Even during his days with the Raiders, Kentner found time for minor hockey— serving as manager for the 1979-80 novice zone champions— so giving up the game altogether wasn't really realistic. Kentner went on to serve as GM of the Sr. A Raiders, president of the Jr. B Gemini/Raiders and to chair the amalgamation of the Georgetown Minor Hockey Support Group with the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association. Not to mention chairing the Hockey Heritage Council for 24 of its 25 years.

Through it all Kentner said his biggest supporter has been his wife Gerry. He said running a business, looking after his family and fitting in his hockey activities was simple.

"It was very easy, my wife filled in both at the business and at home. Gerry is the single best asset I have. While I was all focused on hockey, she made a home."

Kentner's only regret about his hockey career is that he didn't make more time for daughters Lori and Stephanie.

Though he initially hesitated about accepting the award, he decided to take the honour for those who helped him.

"It's a very big thrill and very flattering but I'm just a representative of all those people who supported me."

Fittingly, when members of the selection committee arrived at his home to inform him of his selection, Kentner was at a meeting for the Halton Hills Sports Museum. Another goal for a man who has found the net a lot more off the ice than he did on it.

Kentner will be honoured at the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award dinner March 4 at Holy Cross Church. *Hockey Night in Canada* host Ron MacLean will be the master of ceremonies.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

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