

HOCKEY HERITAGE

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Brian James honoured at 29th dinner

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Staff Writer

At a time when Georgetown is angling to earn the distinction of being named Hockeyville 2006, the latest recipient of the Hockey Heritage Council Award was praised by a number of guest speakers for exemplifying the qualities that have made him "the consummate volunteer."

Georgetown native Brian James was honoured for his dedication to hockey at all levels in the town in several different capacities, including serving as a minor hockey coach for the past 40 years. None of the players James has coached has made it to the National Hockey League or even the Ontario Hockey League, but local resident and OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League commissioner Bob Hooper said that wasn't how he would evaluate a minor hockey coach.

"How many people has (James) met and how many young people has he influenced?" Hooper asked. "Brian James is one of those people which every town needs. He has given so much of his own time and never asked for anything in return."

One of the youngest recipients of the award, the 52-year-old James was showered with tributes and gifts from all levels of government and organizations such as the Ontario Minor Hockey Association. The 29th-annual GHHC awards dinner was held at the Holy Cross Auditorium and is considered the toughest ticket in Georgetown, with another sold-out crowd of 328 attending.

"I want to thank all of the guys I've coached with, especially my biggest mentors, Charlie (Hanman, the 2005 HHA recipient) and Gerry Inglis (1982), who meant a lot to how I coached and still coach that way today."

Among the celebrities on hand at the head table for Monday's festivities were Canadian Olympic women's hockey team gold medallist Cheryl Pounder of Mississauga, Toronto Maple Leaf fan favourite Wendel Clark and TSN's Gord Miller.

Brian James, recipient of the 2006 Georgetown Hockey Heritage Council Award, chats with Canadian women's Olympic team gold medallist Cheryl Pounder during a break in the proceedings on Monday evening at the Holy Cross Auditorium. Pounder was one of the guest speakers for the 29th-annual GHHC awards dinner and brought with her the gold medal she and her Canadian teammates earned two weeks previously in Turin, Italy at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. James, meanwhile, received his share of accolades for 40 years of volunteering his time on the local hockey scene.
Photo by Ted Brown

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