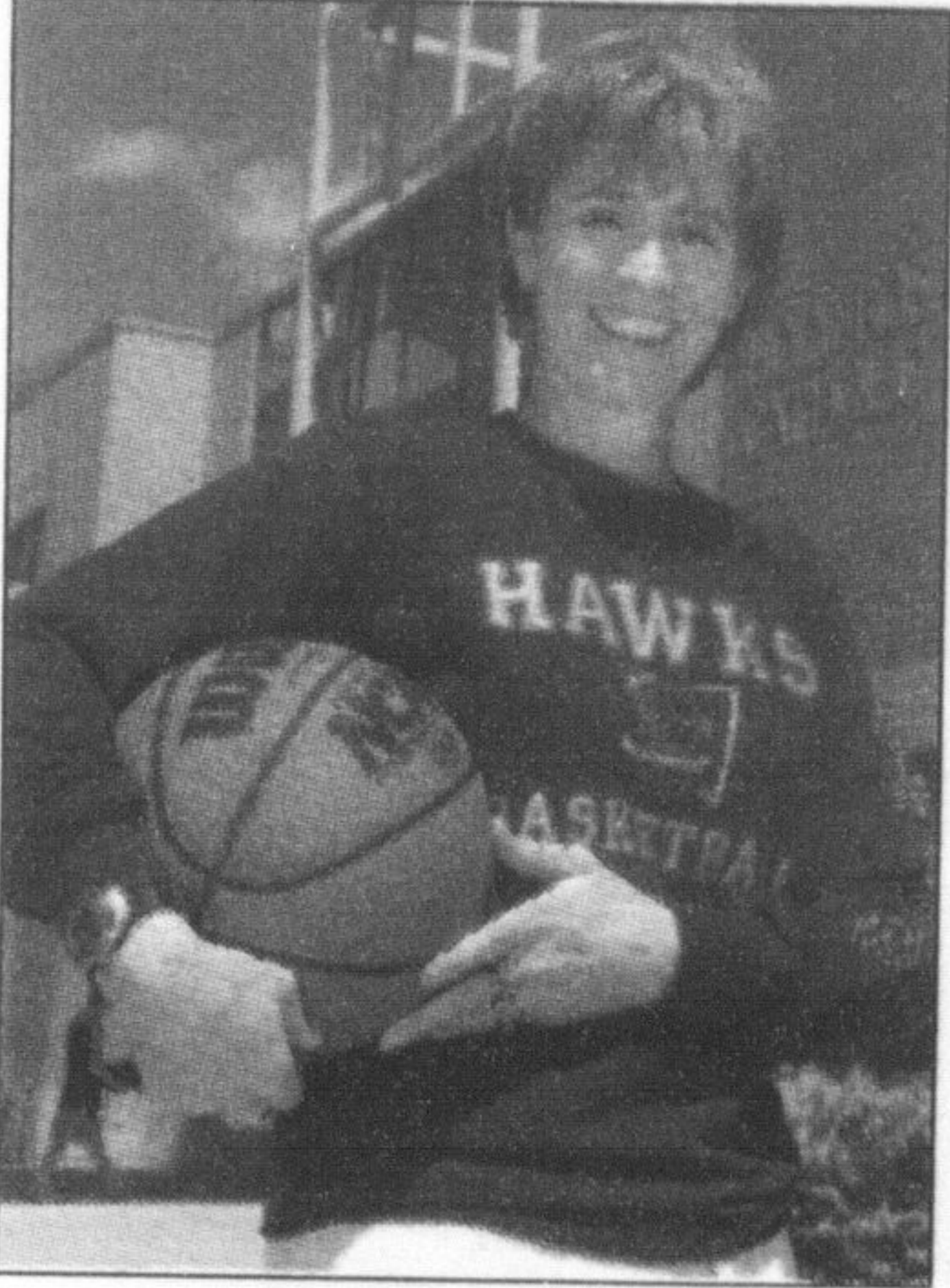


Seasoned b-ball coach earns top regional award



Cin Johnston

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Cin Johnston has guided the Holy Rosary Hawks to an awful lot of basketball success over the years. Recently, they've netted her a little well-deserved recognition in return.

Last month the longtime hoops coach was honoured with the Halton Catholic District School Board's John Shaw Award of Coaching Excellence. Nominated by principal Carol Cowan on behalf of players, parents and peers, Johnston was one of just four elementary school teachers from across the region to earn the award for the 2005/06 school year, and the first in recent memory from north Halton.

"Cin's an ace coach. She's so dedicated and just brings out the best in her players," said Cowan.

Leading her Hawks to a fourth North Halton title in six years this past spring, Johnston was no doubt honoured by the distinction — but seemed equally humbled by it. "I just love sports and working with the kids," said The Champion's Coach of the Month for this past May, who along with coaching basketball is a region-wide co-ordinator of track and field and is set to begin officiating volleyball this fall. "I really don't think I've done anything that others haven't."

There's many who'd beg to differ with that.

Among them is Barb O'Connor, an elementary curriculum consultant for health and physical education with the board and one of three people

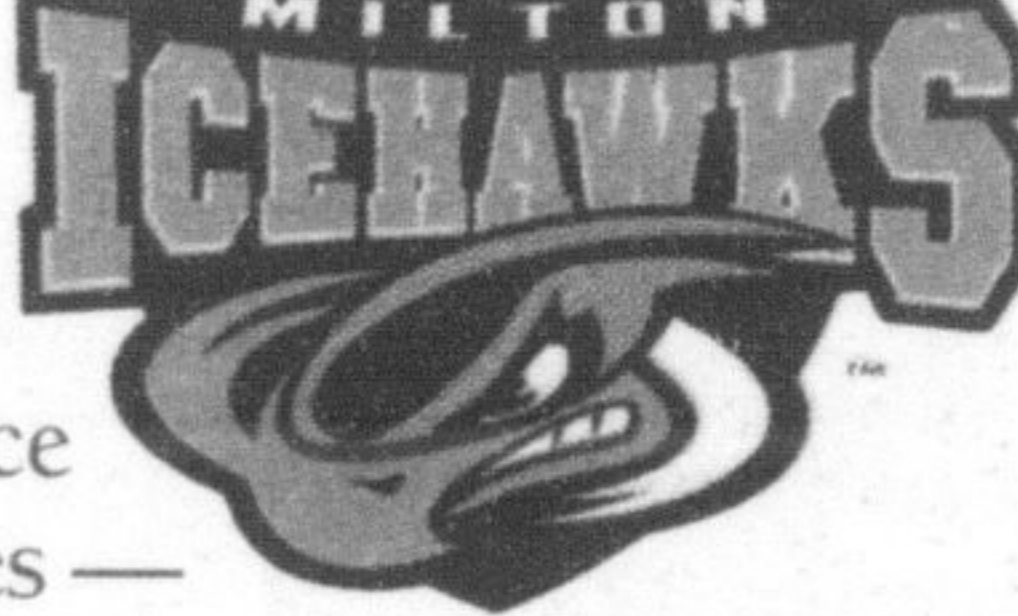
who decided on the awards. With her three children all going through the Holy Rosary sporting ranks, she's seen firsthand Johnston's contributions to the basketball program — as well as her dedication to sports in general.

The latter took her and O'Connor to a province-wide physical education conference last year, while the seasoned basketball instructor regularly attends clinics and reads materials to "get fresh ideas on coaching strategies and drills."

Said O'Connor, "I'm really proud Cin got the award. She doesn't fit what you'd think of a JK teacher in terms of coaching. She's innovative, progressive and not afraid to step outside the norm. And she's so unselfish. Her first priority is always the kids."

Big tests ahead for young 'Hawks

The IceHawks were certainly challenged during an especially hectic September, but the real litmus test could come over the next eight days.

During that time the rebuilding  Jr. A club has three straight games against formidable opponents. That stretch starts tonight with a home-ice showdown against the Oakville Blades — who now sport three former IceHawks, including 2005-06 Western Conference Rookie of the Year Cody Goloubef.

Sunday the IceHawks are in Burlington, while next Friday they play host to the beefed up Hamilton Red Wings. All three games start at 7:30 p.m.

Milton currently occupies seventh spot in the West with a 3-7-1-1 record — with all three wins and one tie coming at Memorial Arena.

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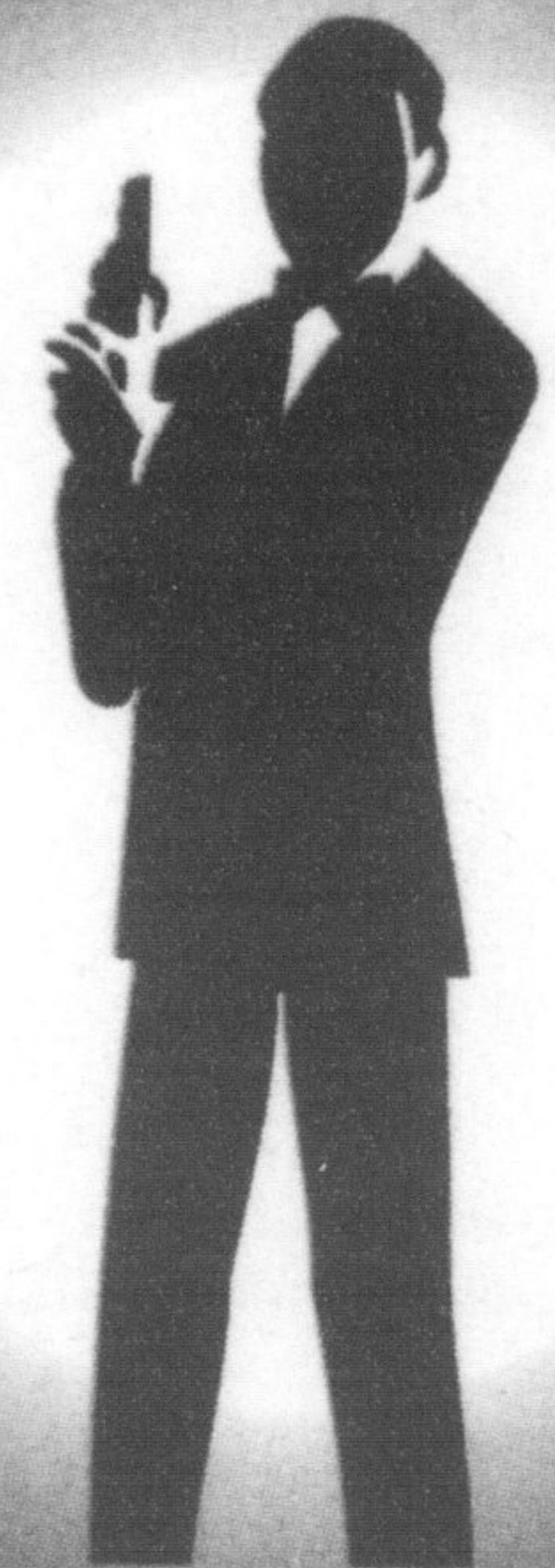


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