

# Hogarth inspiration to peers and pupils alike

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Tammy Hogarth isn't so much an advocate for what determination can achieve as a walking testament to it.

The fact that she's even involved in martial arts today — much less a former world champion and seasoned instructor with Fighting Griffins Martial Arts — is no doubt a source of inspiration to peers and pupils alike.

Nearly 18 years ago, the lifelong Miltonian was the victim of a work-related accident that left her with a severe nerve disorder called RSD (Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy). There was talk that she might have to have part of her left leg amputated and she was still on crutches two-and-a-half years later — when she met future mentor and husband Scott Hogarth.

Given her situation, the idea that she'd someday enjoy international prominence in karate would have seemed downright laughable.

"If you were to have told me that back then I'd have said you were nuts," quipped Tammy, November's Champion Coach of the Month. "For the first two years I basically just traveled around with Scott and watched him teach and compete. But I got more and more interested in it and with my background in athletics before the accident, I just had to try it myself."

At the risk of stating the obvious, that was no small undertaking. With limited mobility and regular discomfort, Tammy could have easily given in to the pain and/or frustration on more than a few occasions. But with ample determination — and unlimited support from her would-be life partner — it didn't take long for her progress and promise to grow.

The rest, as they say, is history.

"Scott has been my rock. There were times when I'd be tearing up because it hurt too much, and he'd say 'You've got to stick with it'. He believed in me and made me believe in myself. At first I was scared about falling on my face, but



Tammy Hogarth

Scott really inspired me," said the now third-degree black belt. "He's also taught a blind student and another with Cerebral Palsy, so he's definitely had some real challenges as a Sensei. The main thing about Scott is his incredible patience."

Tammy has no doubt adopted plenty of that herself, along with many of the other virtues found in effective martial arts instructors. Just ask her students.

"Sensei Tammy always has time to listen to anyone who is having problems or just has something exciting to share. She teaches us how to properly defend ourselves in all different situations and treats everyone at the Dojo as if they were her own kids," stated a Champion Coach of the Month nomination e-mail from brothers Damian and Xander Ewing.

Added adult student and fellow Fighting Griffins instructor Vi Sadler, "When I was a brown belt Sensei Tammy took me under her wing, as she has done for many others, and helped me train for my black belt grading. I would not have succeeded without her."

While reaching world champion sta-

tus several years ago and enjoying umpteen successes as a competitor, Tammy seems more eager to discuss her students' achievements — including last January when two youths she'd instructed for the better part of a decade attained their black belts.

"That was a real moment," she said, adding she has her first adult student going for his black belt soon as well.

The key to martial arts training, she explained, is striking the right balance between fun and seriousness — which can be especially important with children. "I enjoy teaching all the classes,

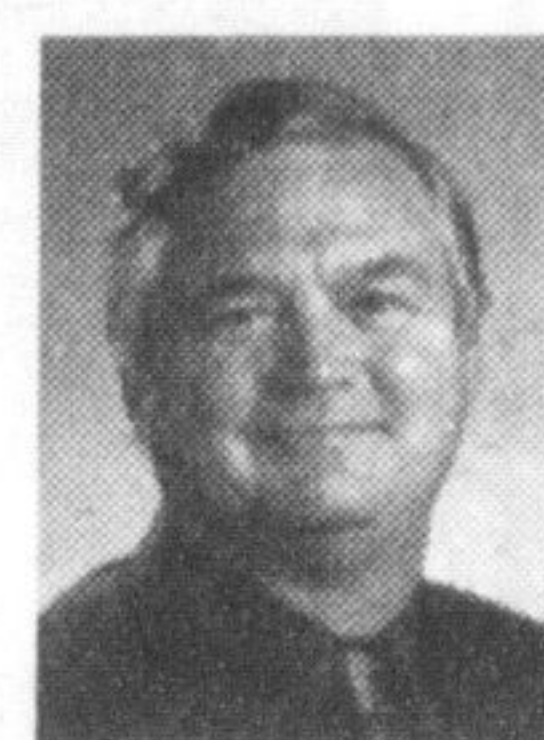
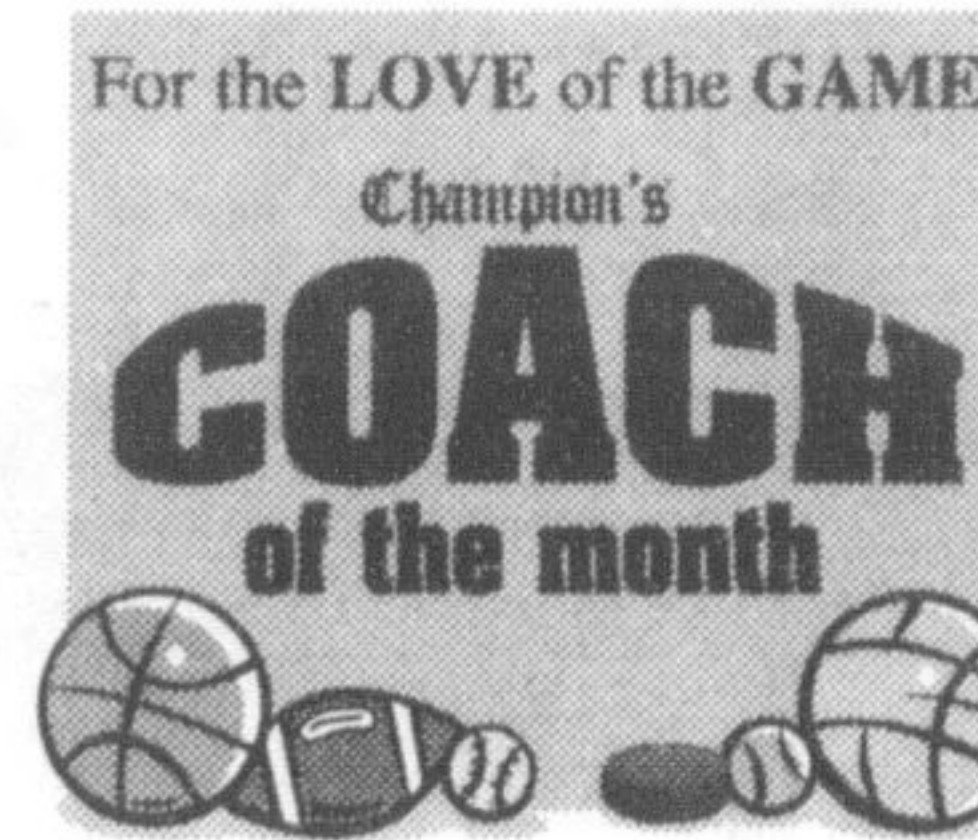
but particularly the kids. Often they give me more energy than I give them."

And whether young or old, she stressed that the cornerstone to martial arts success is believing in yourself.

And she should know.

"Not to pat myself on the back, but it does sometimes amaze me how far I've come in martial arts," said Tammy.

Added Scott, "When I first met Tammy she was on double crutches and when she won her world championship it wasn't against disabled competitors. What she's accomplished really is amazing."



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Peter Love  
Chief Energy Conservation  
Officer of Ontario

I would like to say "Thanks!" to everyone who answered my call to use less electricity this summer. We've made a good start, and energy efficiency is happening in Ontario. Our electricity use has dropped by 2.5% per capita since 2004 — a great achievement during a time when our economy was growing.

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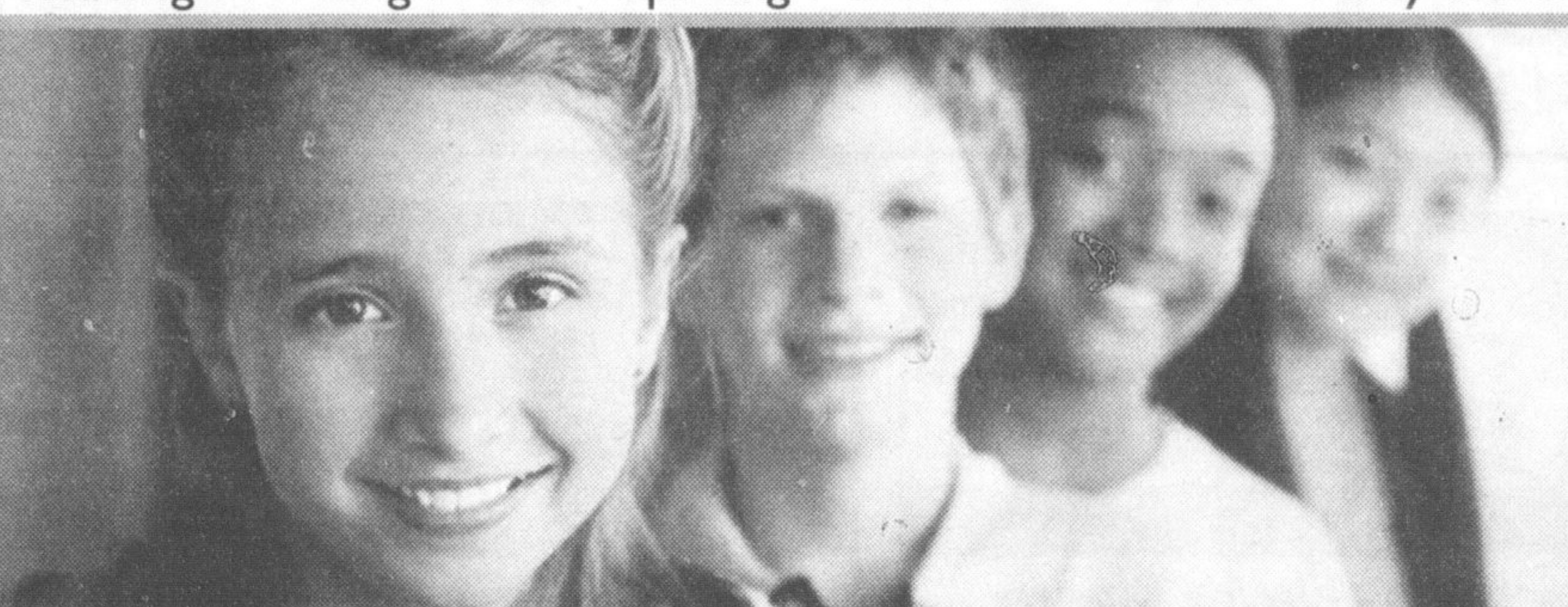
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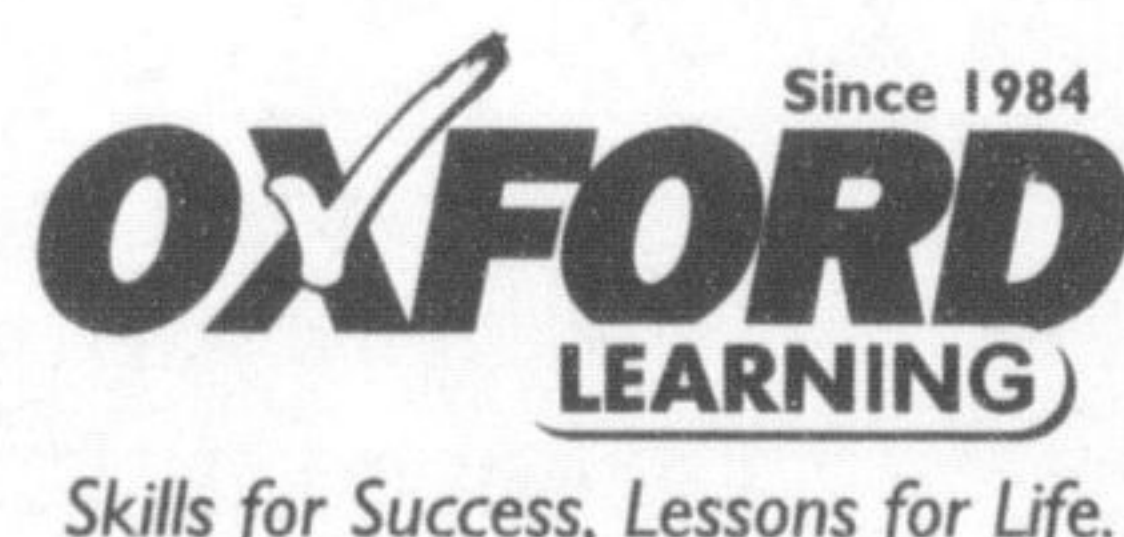
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