



*Gaylord Powless*

## Community mourns lacrosse legend, Gaylord Powless

by L.M. VanEvery

SIX NATIONS - Surrounded by his immediate family at his home on Seneca Road, lacrosse legend, Gaylord Powless died early Saturday, July 28th, 2001 after succumbing to cancer. He was laid to rest yesterday at St. Paul's Anglican Church on Sour Springs Road.

As previously planned, on Saturday, the Powless family attended the dedication at the pow wow of a portrait-in-pencil drawing by artist, Hendrik Lenis that honoured Gaylord and his contribution to "the Creator's Game." His parents, Wilma and Ross, along with many other members of the Powless family were there to accept the honour.

Gaylord lived to see the finished portrait that captured him 'at the top of his game.' He signed the original and was aware before his passing that the dedication would take place at the pow wow.

As news spread throughout the community of Gaylord's passing, many people remembered the man and the contributions he made to the sport of lacrosse. You would be hard pressed in the community of Six Nations not to find a person who had a story to share about Gaylord Powless and the game of lacrosse.

Some had stories about seeing him play lacrosse as a small boy in front of the Powless home on Sour Springs Road. Others remember playing lacrosse along side Powless in the early 1960's when lacrosse was in its' early stages of becoming an organized sport at Six Nations. Still others,

like Tabby Jamieson, remember playing on the 'Warriors of Old' team with Gaylord in 1993 at a tournament in Huntsville. "He had a lot of natural talent," he said.

Gaylord's ability as a lacrosse player was firmly based on a foundation of love for the game according to his father, Ross. It was a combination of talent given to him by the Creator and "he loved the game, he listened to advice and he had a lot of pride," said Ross.

When he was younger, his mother told him that she wouldn't go to see him play

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if all he did was sit in the penalty box. "That changed his style of playing," said Ross. "He wanted her to watch him play so he stayed out of the penalty box. He took a lot of abuse from players who wanted to take him off the floor," he said.

Gaylord's style of play was certainly influenced by his father as well. Ross, inducted into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1969, was the first coach that Gaylord had. His style of lacrosse was based on team playing and utilizing individual player skills to make a team strong. Gaylord learned this philosophy well as his career accomplishments reflected, in such titles as "Most Valuable Player" and "Most Sportsmanlike Player."

Yesterday, people whose lives had crossed paths with Gaylord's came to pay their respects to a man who had touched them in some way. If what people say about you is any indication of what kind of person you were, Gaylord Powless was a fine human being.

Some of his team mates from the Oshawa Green Gaels where he played from 1964-67 attended his funeral and remembered Gaylord as a player and a

friend. Some began a friendship with him almost forty years ago that continued through the years, such as Jim Higgs. "Gaylord and I played on teams with one another and against one another," he said. "His competitiveness made him stand out on the floor combined with his abilities made him a strong player," he added.

Another former Green Gael, Don Stinson, from Huntsville remembered Gaylord as being 'really good with his stick and a leader by example.' Stinson was the only Oshawa Green Gael who was a member of all seven Minto Cup championship teams from 1963-69.

Neil Armstrong who played with the Green Gaels from 1964-66 described Gaylord as 'a real big game player.' "The bigger the game, the bigger the moment, the better he played," he said.

Armstrong talked about the disbelief he experienced at the first game that Gaylord played as a Green Gael in 1964.

"The game was in Hastings and right off the bat, he broke his lacrosse stick. His dad went out to the car and got him another one, brand new," he said. Armstrong just couldn't get over Powless being able to play with a brand new stick that wasn't even



*Portrait by Hendrik Lenis dedicated to Powless family*



*Front: Ross Powless, Gaylene Powless & Wilma Powless accepting portrait of Gaylord at the Champion of Champions Pow wow*

broken in. Gaylord scored three goals and got five assists in that game using a brand new stick.

Gaylord Powless also left his impressions on the lacrosse community of Six Nations as well. Six Nations' Arrows General Manager, Darryl Hill believes, "he set a good goal for all the young kids to strive for as well as setting the high standard for all lacrosse players on the reserve." "His passion for the game was unsurpassed," said Kim Smith, Arrows coach.

In the media, Gaylord Powless had been described as, "the Marvellous Mohawk", "best all-round lacrosse star" and "the quintessential natural." To his community, he was a life-long friend, a team-mate, a coach, a neighbour, a cousin, a son, a brother, a dad, a grandpa, a husband. Six Nations mourns his loss.

The talent, dedication and

accomplishments of Gaylord Powless will continue to inspire the lacrosse players that continue to play the game. As the lacrosse history books are written and stories told to all children and their children, Gaylord Powless will be a name forever synonymous with lacrosse.

In the words of relative, friend and Six Nations Councillor Alton VanEvery, "Gaylord Powless was truly an all-star in every aspect of the word. He not only carried lacrosse teams on his shoulders but was also comfortable in carrying family, community and a sports nation on his shoulders. He was a model and an inspiration to all, especially to the Six Nations people. He will be sadly missed but will continue to inspire our youth for a long, long time."

When we speak of lacrosse and the greatest players who ever played the game, we will speak the name, Gaylord Powless.