

2018 Builder Inductees, Mike Townes Springwater News

The Springwater Sports Heritage Hall of Fame has announced their inductees for 2018. This is the third group to be part of the Hall of Fame. In 2014 the inaugural Induction Ceremony consisted of eleven Athletes, seven Builders and four Teams. In 2016 there were two Athletes, four Builders and three Teams.

The class of 2018 includes three athletes, three builders and three teams. The late **Homer Barrett** (Hockey Fastball), **Tom VanNatter** (Hockey) and **Frankie Edgecombe** (Volleyball, Ball Hockey, and Hockey) are the three latest athletes that will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on September 14th at the Barrie Country Club. The Builders include the late **John Brown, Harold McMaster and Donald Stoddart** for their outstanding contribution, service and dedication to sport. The three Teams entering the Hall of Fame include the **1950 Minesing Fastball Team**, the **1976/77 Dutcher & Corbett Elmvale Peewee Hockey Team** and the **1982 Elmvale Angels Ladies Fastball Team**.

In my last column, I reviewed the Athletes, so in this column I am going with the Builders. The teams will be recognized in a later edition.

John Brown, who passed away on September 1, 2006, will be inducted in the Builder category in 2018, as well as in the team category with the 1982 Elmvale Angels as their coach. John is also in the Sports Hall of Fame with the 1964-65 Alex Currie Juvenile Hockey Team (Player) and the 1977 Elmvale Merchants Fastball Team (Executive) that both were inducted in 2014.

John was an OHA linesman/referee for five years as well as an OMHA referee for many more years. He was the first president of the Simcoe Rural Fastball League as well as an executive of Elmvale Minor Hockey, Elmvale Merchants Fastball team, Elmvale Thursday Night Bush League, Elmvale Merchants Intermediate Hockey team, and President of the Barrie District Ladies Fastball League. As well, he organized many non-sports events over the years in Elmvale.

John coached the Elmvale Mets to the finals in the Simcoe Rural Fastball League in 1975 but coaching the Elmvale Angels Ladies Fastball to the PWSA All-Ontario Championship in 1982 was his most satisfying victory. He coached the team from 1977-1984 winning numerous tournaments and league championships.

John then moved on to politics starting as an Elmvale councillor, then Reeve of Elmvale, Deputy Mayor and Mayor of Springwater as well as Warden of Simcoe County.

Trish (Downey) Campbell wrote “**Brownie was a mentor to us. He made us believe in ourselves. I have certainly tried to carry his wisdom, his humour and his zest for life along with me. Brownie helped shape what I am and what I’ve been able to accomplish and I’m sure he had that effect on many of us. I look back on my years with the Angels as some of my best ever, and I can thank Brownie for that!**”

Harold McMaster has lived his whole life on Grenfel Road in the old Vespra Township. He has been involved in Grenfel community for decades, first as a player, then as a coach, organizer and leader.

He played fastball and hockey for Grenfel as a young man and then became a key leader in bringing youth fastball to Grenfel. He was involved coaching fastball into the mid 1990’s. In the 1980’s, Harold and Charlie Scott coached the local team from the Vespra League in the OASA playdowns. In 1982, the team reached the finals but had to settle for second best.

Harold served on the committee that built the ball diamond in Midhurst known as Doran Park. He also was a leader in creating and maintaining the rink at the Grenfel community centre supporting hockey and public skating for many years. Harold also played a major role in renovating and maintaining the hall at this facility.

Harold received the Olympic award in 1988 for his lifetime coaching contributions and in 2017 Harold was presented with the John Graves Simcoe Medal of Excellence for his outstanding contributions to the community of Grenfel and area.

Joe McMaster wrote “**Harold always coached emphasizing a healthy balance between skill development, competition, teamwork and fun. The teams from Grenfel enjoyed much success both by developing healthy, active youth and winning league championships on more than one occasion.**”

Don Stoddart, who lived in Oakville but moved to Springwater Township at an early age, has coached, organized, innovated, fund-raised and founded opportunities for female hockey players of all ages and abilities. He has also assisted other female hockey organizations in growing their programs in such a way that it has benefited many more players.

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Don's involvement in female hockey has helped develop and advance the sport to new levels never seen before. He has tirelessly worked to manage, promote and influence a positive environment where girls of all ages and women hockey players can flourish.

Since 2002, Don has coached, but he saw a need for improvement so he joined the Brampton Canadettes Board creating their Hall of Fame, their Scholarship Program and The Two Nations College Prep Series, and in 2012, he became their President to oversee the organization as well as the largest and longest running female hockey tournament, the Annual Easter Tournament. Don also found time to coach and manage the organization's most elite team.

Don has been directly responsible for over 250 girls throughout Canada and the USA receiving scholarships for post-secondary education. He founded the Showcase Tournament that is a highly scouted and recognized tournament in amateur female hockey.

Don's involvement in female hockey is extremely highly regarded. During an edition of CBC's Hometown Hockey recently, Don McLean took time to 'shout out' to Don Stoddart. Don was a finalist in the Kraft Top 100, a campaign to recognize key volunteers in minor hockey associations across Canada.

Don has raised the profile of female hockey and, through his enormous commitment of time, energy and resources, he has made it possible for thousands of girls to have fun while pursuing their dreams.

Ted Dean, Past President of the Barrie Sharks said "Don was always willing to help out when and where we needed it. I reached out to him to help streamline and improve our Sharkfest Tournament and to help me understand how to build an association (we had 180 players at the time and now have 500) with much of that growth attributed to Don's ideas. Don has spoken to our players about staying in the area to play as there are great opportunities here with no need to travel up and down the highway. Don is a wonderful promoter of female hockey, enabling players from all over to find a place in universities in Canada and the USA. Again, everything that Don has done has been behind the scenes, but to me, that's the definition of a builder...helping other people achieve their goals and dreams."

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I welcome these three new deserving inductees in the Builder Category of the Springwater Sports Hall of Fame.