

Hall of Fame Inductees

Athletes



Gina Aucoin Doleman, and Pam Ponikau with her son and Hans' brother Christian Ponikau, with Skate Nova Scotia President Sheila Beard.

Gina Aucoin-Doleman & Hans Peter Ponikau

Gina AuCoin and Hans Peter Ponikau formed a dance couple in 1973. Peter's Mother, Pam, had a background as an actress, ballet dancer and a gold standard ice dancer in her native England. His Father, Horst, was a Gold medallist in skating and was an athlete on the German Olympic team in track & field. Gina loved to skate and in the early 1970's her parents asked the Ponikaus to coach Gina. At Gina's 1st test day, she passed 9 dances establishing a record in Cape Breton.

The two became a dance couple despite the fact that, at that point in time, Gina was a head taller than Peter. However, on a trip to London, England with Pam, Gladys Hogg, Pam's former coach, recognized their potential and recommended that they stay together

until they were closer in height. This proved to be a great suggestion/recommendation. At this point in time, both continued their single skating as well as Dance.

To lessen travel time to train together, Gina very graciously agreed to attend Grade 12 in New Glasgow as opposed to finishing her high school in Glace Bay.

Once they were similar in height, Roy Bradshaw agreed to coach them in Toronto during the summer months of 1976 & 1977. In 1978, they began training full time in Toronto. Bernard Ford, well-known in ice dancing circles, also coached this team.

Their dedication, persistence & hard work paid off as they steadily climbed the ladder in their chosen field of competitive Ice Dancing. Gina's parents, as well as her 4 brothers & her sister were very supportive and encouraging.

Although this couple were consistent winners at various levels in Nova Scotia and the Maritime Provinces, it wasn't until 1977 that their climb began at Nationals when they finished 15th in Novice Dance in Calgary, followed by a 5th placement in Junior Dance in Victoria in 1978 and the Silver medal in Thunder Bay in 1979.

As a result of their successful climb at Nationals, Skate Canada (known at that time as the CFSA – Canadian Figure Skating Association) chose them to compete in the 1979 Coup Des Alpes Competition in Europe. This consisted of 2 sections – the Grand Prix in St. Gervais in France plus the Nebelhorn Trophy in Obersdorf, Germany. Despite the fact that this was their first time competing in Senior Dance and at their first International competitions, they won the gold medal in both competitions and hence, became the winners of the Coupe des Alps. This was the first time in 8 years that Canada had won this trophy!

Hans Peter & Gina jumped to Senior Dance in 1980 and won the Bronze medal in Kitchener and Prague, Czechoslovakia followed by a 4th place finish in Halifax in 1981.

Gina Aucoin (now Doleman) became a skating coach in Ontario and passed along her love of this sport to her 3 children – Matthew (18 in 2007 so 36), Andrew (16 in '07 so now 34) & Brittany (10 in '07 so now 28) – all of whom became ice dancers.



John Mattatall and Mylene Brodeur, with Skate Nova Scotia President Sheila Beard

Mylene Brodeur & John Mattatall

It was a blending of 2 unique skaters into a remarkable partnership!

In 2006, John Mattatall from rural Nova Scotia and Mylene Brodeur, from rural Quebec began their journey as a Nova Scotia Pair team.

Thank you, Mylene for your willingness to represent our wonderful province of Nova Scotia.

John had been introduced to Pair skating (with Terra Findlay) previously, but this was a totally new experience for Mylene as previously she was a singles competitor.

Fortunately, they were under the tutelage of both Richard Gautier and Bruno Marcotte with Bruno's sister, Julie, adding her expertise as the team's choreographer.

After a few short months of training, Mylene and John found themselves in Obersdorf competing at the Nebelhorn Trophy finishing 4th! This was the first of many International competition assignments.

At their first Grand Prix – Skate Canada International – they were awarded the Most Improved Personal Best Score Award – quite an accomplishment for such a new Pair team!

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

The couple were selected to represent Canada at various competitions all over the world. They included:

A 1st place finish at the 2007 Ondrej Nepela Trophy in Bratislava

In 2008, they were assigned to:

- The ISU Grand Prix Skate Canada International held in Ottawa where they finished 4th.
- The Four Continents competition in Korea where they placed 7th
- At the Cup of China in Beijing they placed 6th despite the fact that they were invited to attend this competition at the last moment due to a late Pair withdrawal plus arriving late in China as the practice was already on the ice so there was no time to contend with “jet-lag”.

In 2009, they placed 6th at the Rostelecom Cup in Moscow and 5th at NHK Trophy in Nagoya.

Their placement at the 2010 Eric Bompard Grand Prix in Rostelecom was 4th.

However, 2009 was “their” year as they were the Bronze medalists at our Canadian Championships followed by a top 10 finish at the World Championships – their 1st time to have qualified to represent Canada!!

Mylene is married to Nic Young - a former Singles skater – and they have 2 children – Calvin & Chelsea. They reside in Quebec close to family and friends, but their busy lives seems to “keep them off the ice”.

John is married to Shadia (pronounced with a short “a”) and they have a daughter, Lennon. John remains active in the skating world as he is a Coach for the Truro Skating Club. He volunteers as the Skater Development Chair for Nova Scotia, serves on Skate Canada Committees and is a Learning Facilitator for Power Skating.

Builders



Patricia Benoit Chafe with her award presented by Skate Nova Scotia President Sheila Beard

Patricia Benoit Chafe

Our current judging system definitely benefitted from the involvement of our next Hall of Fame honoree.

Dr. Patricia Benoit Chafe was a skater from Lower Sackville who eventually became a judge. She was the Chair of the Nova Scotia Judges Committee for the 1996-97, 1997-98 and the 1999-2000 seasons. She was also the Judges Chair in the Ottawa area for 2002-03.

Patricia received her PhD in Mathematics from Dalhousie and has taught at various universities including St. Francis Xavier, Saint Mary's and Carleton. She was the Director of Planning & Analysis for Skate Canada from 2002-2005 and created her own high performance consulting business entitled "Jump Beyond" from 2005 – 2013. From 2013 – 2017, Patricia was the Chief Sport Officer at Skate Canada where her main focus

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

was to drive Skate Canada's strategy across the full spectrum of athletes, coaches and officials. Currently, she is the Director of Winter Sport at Own The Podium.

The Olympic judging scandal in Salt Lake City in 2002 resulted in the need for change. Enter Dr. Patricia! With her doctorate in Math and love of figure skating, Patricia was the perfect person to improve the competitive judging system used at the time. She was invited to help the group of scientists and sports officials from around the world who were tasked with analyzing and making changes to correct the problem.

It was becoming more and more obvious that judges at the time – whether local, provincial, national or international – were majorly focused on the various jumps performed. Other parts of a program were pretty much ignored such as spins, connecting steps, use of music, entry steps etc.

That all ended when Patricia created the new judging system that was first used internationally in 2004. The ISU (International Skating Union) approved these revolutionary revisions to the judging system in June 2004. Although this system was optional for a number of international events for the 2004-05 season, it was implemented immediately at all ISU Championships and at both the Grand Prix and Junior Grand Prix. This meant that value was now given to the choreography and quality of the elements performed as well as the program itself. Programs became much more balanced.

She was part of the Canadian delegation at the Biennial Congresses of the ISU – Schevenigen in 2004; Budapest in 2006; Monaco in 2008; Barcelona in 2010; Kuala Lumpur in 2012 and Dublin in 2014.

Patricia attended 3 Olympic Games: 2006 in Torino; 2010 in Vancouver & 2014 in Sochi – all with NBC Olympics & Skate Canada. She has also been the Performance & Statistical Figure Skating Analyst for CBC, CTV & NBC Sports!

Currently, she is a National Senior level Judge. We here today, as well as all skaters, judges and parents owe immense gratitude to Dr. Patricia.



Accepting Peter's award on his behalf are his two daughters Susan Casey and Jill Knowles, with Skate Nova Scotia President Sheila Beard

Peter Bowen

Peter Bowen emigrated to Nova Scotia with the Royal Navy. His life was enhanced when he married Wynne and became the father of 2 daughters – Jill & Susan. Realizing that Ice Skating was a very Canadian activity, he and his wife enrolled their daughters in a Learn to Skate program.

In 1970, he became the President of Dartmouth Figure 8's Skating Club. He created the first club constitution submitting it for approval to the Canadian Figure Skating Association - as it was then known - for approval.

By 1973, he had helped build the Dartmouth Figure 8's Club to over 750 members!

In 1972, Peter volunteered as a committee member for the Dartmouth Winter Carnival – a very popular endeavour that consisted of many events held over a 10-day period. At that point in time, figure skating was not an offered activity, but through Peter's encouragement, determination, and diligence, Skate Dartmouth was created in 1974. It was believed to have been the first Free Skate competition in Canada as figures were not included! Today, what was known as Skate Dartmouth is now known as the Robert McCall Memorial Competition.

During this time, the City of Dartmouth's population was expanding markedly, and it was evident that there was an insufficient number of indoor ice surfaces. Peter began to lobby the City of Dartmouth in 1973 for the need for more rinks. This became even more

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

critical when the Memorial Arena was lost to fire in the spring of 1974. As a result of his encouragement and dedication, the Gray Arena opened in 1974 followed by the Bowles arena in 1978.

In addition to his love of and willingness to improve facilities for the sport of Figure Skating, Peter served as the Indoor Chair for the Dartmouth Winter Carnival from 1972 – 1981 and as a Board Director of Sport Nova Scotia from 1977 – 1982.

From 1979 – 1980, he also served as the Chairman of the Recreation Advisory Board for the then City of Dartmouth.

In 1982, he received a citation from Sport Nova Scotia for his outstanding contribution to Amateur Sport at both the Civic and Provincial levels. As if he wasn't busy enough and with no background in actually skating, Peter's love of numbers and willingness to volunteer led him to becoming an Accountant (today known as a Data Specialist) for many competitions throughout Nova Scotia.

Although Peter passed away in 2004, he would be pleased to know that not only have his grandchildren learned to skate, but his great-grandchildren are continuing his love of this sport!

Coaches



Accepting the award in Connie's behalf is her husband Steven, and her son Sandy, with Skate Nova Scotia President Sheila Beard

Connie Frazee

Connie Frazee was a skating coach who definitely was a willing traveller. While many coaches mainly taught in the area in which he or she lived, Connie found herself at a rink anywhere from New Glasgow – where she was born - to Pictou, Antigonish, Canso and Sydney in Cape Breton – to name but a few.

She was the Canada Games Coach twice – once in New Brunswick and the other when the Games were held in Whitehorse located in the Yukon Territory.

Besides her willingness to travel, she often volunteered her time and expertise. She was a member of Nova Scotia's Coaching Committee in the 1992 / 93 skating season + again for the 7 successive seasons from 1994 to and including 2001 and once again from 2002 to 2004.

She served on her Area's Coaches Committee from 2001-2003.

In addition, during the 1998 – 1999 season, Connie served on our provincial Skater Development and Public Relations Committees. Once again, she volunteered for our provincial Skater Development Committee from 2000 – 2002 as well as our Judges Committee from 2000-2001. Her time and talents were very much appreciated!

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

Many of her skaters qualified to compete at the National Level. They included: Shawn Fequet - the 1st year that Tomorrow's Champions were held and Haley Samson in the Novice Women category at the 2004 Junior Canadians.

In 2005, 3 of her skaters qualified for our national Junior Canadians – Giles Sampson, Karey Beth Delorey and Najala Orrell.

2005 was a busy competitive year for Connie as Megan Smith qualified to compete at the 2005 Canadian Championships as a Senior Woman.

Once again, Megan Smith qualified as a Senior Woman at our 2006 Canadian Championships. Also of note: 3 of her skaters qualified to attend the 2006 National Junior Canadian Championships: Najala Orrell & Shawn Fequet in the Juvenile Pair category, and Jackie Szeto as a Novice Woman.

Jill received very kind words from Ross Phelps who regularly volunteered as an Announcer at many of our National competitions. Both of his daughters attended St Francis Xavier University. During this time, Connie took them “under her wing” as they continued to skate and ventured into the coaching realm. Ross mentions that “Connie was such a wonderful presence in our skating lives”.

Connie was an exceptional coach who contributed so much to skating in the clubs she supported. Her capacity to put together programs that worked for the clubs along with her coaching skills brought out the best in her skaters. Our sport was devastated in November 2008 when Connie, who lived in Fraser's Mountain, passed away suddenly. She was only 42 years old.



Janet accepting the award from Skate Nova Scotia President, Sheila Beard

Janet Dunnet Purdy

Janet Dunnet began skating in Toronto at the age of 5. Partnering with her brother, David, when she was 7 years old, she competed in both Dance and Free Skate. She competed in both Novice Ladies as well as in both Novice and Junior Dance. By the age of 12, she achieved her gold level in Figures (remember those), Free Skate and Dance.

Her Mother was from a large family in Halifax. Needless to say, summers were spent at their cottage in Nova Scotia so the drive from Toronto to Halifax took place at the end of each school year.

In 1972, she attended Dalhousie University graduating with both Bachelor of Arts and Education degrees. While attending Dalhousie, she started coaching at the Halifax Skating Club. Both her brother David, and sister, Tammi coached at this club as well. As a result of her venture into coaching, she discovered that she not only had a passion for skating, but she also loved to coach. It didn't take her long to realize that she was a Maritimer at heart. In 1977, she married her husband, Robert Purdy.

Some of her Dance students included: Marie McNeil & Robert McCall, Kathryn MacLellan & Rob Fraser, Misty Dawn Steele & Paul MacIntosh, Mary Angela Munro & Craig Stirling, Suzanne Flemming & Bruce Langille, Tracy Ramsay & Andrew Neilson. Two of her Single skaters include Charleen Cameron & Andrew MacDonald.

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

Creating the partnership of Marie & Rob allowed their incredible talent to shine as they attained success at both the National and International levels. It demonstrated that Nova Scotia does indeed have many talented skaters as it has been proven that our skaters can indeed be successful at the highest level.

She has credited her family's support and encouragement that has allowed her to follow her desire to coach – whether she is involved with the “Learn to Skate programs, Test and/or Competitive skaters. She loved watching her skaters have fun and continually improve no matter at what level.

Jill received an e-mail from Paul MacIntosh – 1 of Janet's students who is, as many of you are aware, a very successful coach in Ontario. One of the successful dance teams with whom Paul worked was Tessa & Scott!!

Needless to say, he was very complimentary, and I feel that his kind words would be appreciated by all of you. Paul started with a sincere Congratulations to Janet's induction and feels that it is very much deserved!

“I have so many fond memories of Janet. The first thought that always jumps into my head is her absolute style and grace. As a young skater I was always amazed that she looked like a regal champion when she taught at the arena. I think that the way she carried herself affected all of her students. In the summer we would get together with skaters from the entire province. I remember clearly the more experienced skaters who looked so stylish, many of you remember the names, Suzanne, Kathryn, Bruce, Rob and of course “Bobby and Marie”. I was amazed at how they carried themselves, which was a direct reflection of their coaching.

I think one of the things I carry with me every day at the rink is how to treat each skater. Misty and I were not champions like some of Janet's students, but she treated us like we were champions and we had her full focus each time she taught us. That is a teaching style I try and replicate each day and encourage my entire coaching team to live by.

Thank you, Janet, for inspiring me. I know your impact is felt every day by every student I am lucky enough to teach.” - Paul MacIntosh

Officials



Sarah Jane Raine accepting the award from Skate Nova Scotia President Sheila Beard.

Sarah Jane Raine

Our next Honoree took a different route. Her husband, Norman was a skater - a member of the Bluenose Figure Skating Club and, in fact, was Evelyn McCall's Dance partner in the mid to late 1950's! Both of her daughters – Lisa & Rozanne – did skate.

Although a native Haligonian, Sarah Jane began her volunteer career in the Fredericton / Nashwaaksis area. Her involvement at the Nashwaaksis Figure Skating Club was as an Accountant. After 2 years she passed her 1st Levels; 2 years after that she passed her 2nd levels and after another 2 years, she was a Canadian level accountant. She attained this level after only 6 years of diligent work and study. Computers were used for the first time in 1981. She was chosen by Janet Curry to be trained by Honeywell during a weekend in Toronto. She was 1 of only 12 people chosen to attend this training session.

She then continued her training so that she could take over from Jack Zaleski - who was the Chief Computer Accountant for Canada at the time. Her involvement just mushroomed from there! She readily volunteered at both the Club & Section level and was a member of the National Board of Directors for 16 years.

2025 Hall of Fame Inductees

In addition, she served as Section Chair, Judges Chair and Accountants Chair in New Brunswick. She moved to Fredericton in 1966 and we were very happy when she returned to Halifax in 1999.

In the 1998 – 99 skating season Sarah Jane “chiefed” 5 National events including the first Four Continents competition held in 1999 in Halifax! In 1999, she was the first Accountant to become the National Officials Chair. Previously, it was always a judge chosen to serve in this role!

It was agreed that 15 people would be chosen from Newfoundland to British Columbia to be trained on the new system. It was at this time that it was determined that the term “Accountant” no longer fits. It was not working. The term Data Specialist was a much better fit than Accountant. All 15 people attending this meeting, including the Skate Canada staff, agreed to this change. An additional plus was that this terminology translated into French beautifully! Thus, the title of Accountant disappeared in 2005 as everyone became a Data Specialist. She “chiefed” many Canadian Championships throughout our country. She also “chiefed” the last Sun Life Skate Canada held in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Sarah Jane was tasked with training everyone in Eastern Canada! She was the Chief Data Specialist at Canada Winter Games in Charlottetown in 2022. She officially retired in 2024. I verbally added that she chaired the Committee that rewrote the Skate Canada Rule Book.



Vance Hazelton proudly accepting his award

Vance Hazelton

Vance began his volunteer career in Digby, Nova Scotia, where he was a very successful scallop fisherman. He was the President of the Digby Club from 1991 – 93; for 1997 – 1998 and again from 2001 – 2004. He was their Awards Chair from 1997 – 2000. Vance served as the Area Co-Ordinator from 1995 -1997, from 2005-2006 and again from 2008 – 2010.

Vance started volunteering for the Nova Scotia Section (as it was then known) in 1999 when he served as the Vice Chair from 1998 – 2000. He was on the Accountants' Committee from 2001-2002 and became the Data Specialists Chair (the new name for Accountants) from 2006 – 2010. During this time, Vance also served on the Skater Development Committee for the 2007 – 2008 season, while also volunteering as the Competitions Chair for this same time period. In addition to volunteering at many Area and Section competitions, he has been a Data Specialist at various Challenge and Canadian events.

Vance and Sarah Jane often volunteered at a number of the same events once the new computer system came into play! All 3 of Vance's children – Bradley, Chantelle and James participated in our sport of figure skating with both he and his wife, Ann supporting their endeavor's while proudly cheering them on. Currently Bradley is coaching in Edmonton at the Derrick Skating Club. He also co-ordinates their Recreation program.

Vance and Ann's granddaughter has dual citizenship and is currently the Junior Women's Champion of the Philippines! Vance is currently retired although he still owns his scallop fishing boat. He continues to sharpen skates from time to time. Since his retirement, Vance has decided to take up a warmer sport in that he enjoys his games on the golf course!