

## Members of 2015 Oakville Sports Hall of Fame class most proud of helping others

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Throughout his illustrious broadcasting career, Ron MacLean has seen hundreds — if not thousands — of Canadian sporting communities.

So what, if anything, is distinctive about Oakville?

“The first thing is the Hornets women’s hockey. I don’t think there’s a program in Canada to match it,” said the 54-year-old MacLean, who hosted CBC’s *Hockey Night in Canada*

for nearly 30 years and now anchors the *Rogers Hometown Hockey* broadcasts on CityTV.

“Then it’s just the quality of people. The Dan Ferrones, the Larry Cains, all of whom have taken time for others.

“I see it as a very small town but a highly successful situation. Everyone believes because they’ve seen the successes of others that it can be done, but the people who did it don’t walk away and not share some of the inside story. That’s really important.”

Giving back to the local sports community seemed the main theme of the night Thursday at Oakville Conference & Banquet Centre as MacLean (broadcasting), Dean and Scott Oldershaw (canoe-kayak), Fran McLellan (builder, synchronized skating) and Steve Blundy (builder, hockey) were inducted into the Oakville Sports Hall of Fame.

Rather than talk about their own significant accomplishments, members of this year’s class all spoke of the joy they took in seeing other people succeed.

**Dean Oldershaw**

“This is about people that I’ve been able to help,” said Dean Oldershaw, who coached the Oakville Racing Canoe Club to national championship burgees from 1981-83.

“My big thrill was helping others achieve. That satisfied me.. it gave me a thrill.”

Dean, a former teacher at General Wolfe and White Oaks high schools, represented Canada in canoeing at the 1972 and 1976 Olympic Summer Games. The son of three-time Olympic paddler Bert Oldershaw, Dean hoped to compete alongside brothers Scott and Reed at the 1980 Games before Canada boycotted the event in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

“It all stems from my dad,” Dean, now 68, said of the family’s Olympic paddling lineage, which reached three generations when Mark Oldershaw — Scott’s son — won canoeing bronze at the 2012 Games in London.

“My sports hero was in the house, whereas other kids had to look up to Gordie Howe or the Rocket (Maurice Richard). But I had a choice, and that was important too, that my parents didn’t force the canoeing on any of us.”

**Scott Oldershaw**

Scott Oldershaw kayaked at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, reaching the semifinals of the K-1 500 metres, and competed for Canada at the World Canoe Championships from 1971-87. He and Dean became the first Canadian canoeing doubles crew to make the world championship finals when they finished sixth at the 1977 worlds in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Like Dean, Scott pursued his passion for coaching after his competitive career ended. He served as Burloak Canoe Club’s head coach from 1990-2007, winning national championship burgees in 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2007. He also helped develop Bulroak’s Adam van Koeverden into an Olympic kayaking champion and four-time medallist, son Mark into a Olympic medal-winning canoeist, and Mallorie Nicholson into a two-time world canoeing champ.

“A few things stick out over the years,” said Scott, 61, who worked for 20-plus years as a labourer at Aldershot Structural Steel in Dundas before becoming CanoeKayak Canada’s national team coach in 2007. “The obvious would be the Olympic medals, but it’s more than that.



Pictured from left to right, Ron MacLean, Steve Blundy (represented by wife Pat), Fran McLellan, Scott Oldershaw and Dean Oldershaw were inducted into the Oakville Sports Hall of Fame Thursday.

"I think in 20 years when I reflect back, it will be the everyday working with athletes, helping them and trying to get them to achieve their goals. There were cases where you kind of touch their lives personally in a positive way... There are a few athletes who I know their life was made better, not by me, but by being involved in the sport. It made a real difference in their minds, and that's pretty special."

**Fran McLellan**

McLellan was drawn to synchronized skating, rather than traditional figure skating, because of the team element.

"There's a lot about figure skating that only one percent of the population can do themselves. But in synchro, we could have 24-28 on a team. It was all about being a team," said the 76-year-old McLellan. "Finally, the girls had something they could do together."

McLellan skated competitively for 25 years, some of that time spent with daughters Laura and Leanne as teammates, and attained the silver level in dance.

After her active skating career ended, she transitioned to team management and also became a senior level international judge. McLellan is currently the manager of Burlington's Nexxice, which won its ninth straight Canadian synchronized skating championship last weekend in Quebec City.

She was also involved with accreditation for the 1997 Winter Special Olympics World Games in Toronto, work that she ranks among the highlights of her years in sport.

McLellan was the first chair of the Oakville Sports Hall of Fame and presented the silver tray to role models and Olympic champions Otto and Maria Jelinek during the Hall's first induction ceremony in 1999. She never thought she'd be joining them some day as a member.

"I didn't think of things in terms of being a builder. I thought of the Olympians," McLellan said. "It's nice that (the hall is now) extracting from the community the people who do the volunteer thing."

**Steve Blundy**

Blundy was the first-ever student to graduate from Sheridan College (he studied applied arts, and the 1969 diplomas were handed out in alphabetical order), and he spent nearly the rest of his life giving back to the school.

A three-time Ontario Hockey League champion who played hockey professionally for one season in Austria, Blundy began coaching Sheridan's men's team in 1980. He was behind the Bruins' bench for all but one year (when he assisted with the opening of the J.M. Porter Athletic Centre in 1984) until the program was retired in 1992, winning the provincial championship in 1983 and being named Ontario college coach of the year in 1987 and 1988.

Blundy coached numerous male and female hockey teams in the area as well, including Oakville Rangers and Hornets squads. He was inducted into the Ontario College Sports Hall of Fame in 2011 and into the Sheridan College Bruins Hall of Fame the following year.

Blundy lost his battle with cancer last January, dying at the age of 68.

"We've had a bit of a difficult year with recently passing the anniversary of his death," said Blundy's wife Pat, who met Steve at Sheridan, "but this has been a wonderful tribute to him... He would have been so proud, but he was a humble man.

"Instilling upon these young people that hard work can take you a great distance (was important to him)."

**Ron MacLean**

MacLean is best known for covering professional hockey players during his time with Hockey Night in Canada, but he's always had a soft spot for amateur sport.

"What struck me about the Nagano Olympics (in 1998, the first time NHLers participated in men's hockey competition) was that Wayne Gretzky was now sitting at the cafeteria table with (Canadian speed skater) Jeremy Wotherspoon. That's what it was all about... Deep down, the pros are just as excited to sit with Mark Oldershaw. Wayne Gretzky would be just as thrilled as they'd be to sit with him."

Over the years, MacLean has seen many of Canada's top amateur sports moments in person, hosting 10 Olympic Games and several Commonwealth Games. Thursday, MacLean recalled how, after his mother passed away during the 2008 Olympics in Athens and he returned to Canada during the Games, he watched van Koevreden paddle to a silver medal on television in the early morning hours at Larry Cain's Burlington condominium.

"I'm really excited for the group here tonight. I just take so much pride in what Larry Cain and Adam van Koevreden and the Oldershaws have meant to sport in our community. It's a great honour to share a night with them," MacLean said of his inclusion in the Oakville Sports Hall of Fame.

“When you’re a broadcaster — people don’t even recognize half the NHLers now because of visors and helmets and they move around so much — you become a conduit, the storyteller... If you didn’t love sport the way they do, they’d see it and maybe keep you on the outs. But like the referees, we’re here for them.

“We’re there to make a fair playing field, a good lifestyle setting. It’s just a great example sport. Anyone who referees or broadcasts or reports it is helping keep that alive.”