

AWARDS

Randall: From NHL office to Wall of Fame

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When Carol Randall was a kid, she and her dad would make time each Saturday to watch an NHL game on television.

He was a Montreal Canadiens fan, and she rooted for the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Her favourite player was Dick Duff.

Randall's love for the Leafs led her to begin a scrapbook, in which she would keep all the team's stats.

As the hobby grew, she started keeping statistics for a local bantam hockey league.

Meanwhile, as a graduating student at Fredericton High School, she was trying to figure out what to do with the rest of her life.

One day, working in town as a bookkeeper, she read in the newspaper that Ron Andrews had been named head statistician of the National Hockey League.

She also noticed in fine print that he, like she, had suffered from polio.

"I said to myself, 'I must write him,'" Randall recalled Tuesday at the City Club, following an announcement that she would be among the inductees into the Fredericton Sports Wall of Fame in May. "We corresponded for about nine years, and, as I was doing stats, I said I'd love to work at the NHL."

The late Andrews, who was the NHL's director of information and statistics, as well as the creator of the plus-minus rating, told Randall he enjoyed her work, and mentioned that the league was in need of a researcher to dig into the statistical history of the NHL.

"He mentioned it to (league president) Clarence Campbell — he was a hard-nosed man — and he thought it was a woman's place to be a secretary ... he wasn't sold on a woman doing a man's job."

As tough a sell as it was, Randall landed the gig as the NHL's first statistical researcher in 1972.

She relocated to the league office in Montreal, and began her tenure that would last eight years.

During that time, she said she helped double the size of the NHL guidebook, and came up with team win/loss records versus opponents, winning streaks, undefeated streaks, among other stats.

But her favourite find of all was the existence of a so-called perfect game, in which no goals or penalties occurred in a February 1944 match between the Leafs and the Chicago Blackhawks.

In addition to her time with the NHL, Randall has been a statistician with Baseball Canada and the Intercontinental Cup, and worked as an administrator with Baseball New Brunswick and Softball New Brunswick.

She also kept stats for several local candlepin bowling leagues, and has authored a book on the history of candlepin bowling in the province.

Joining Randall at the May induction will be retired pro baseball slugger Matt Stairs, hockey/baseball standout Darrell (Dag) Seymour, track and field officials Rick and Margie Stocker and the 1997-98 UNB men's hockey team.

Dax MacLean, speaking on behalf of the '97-98 UNB national championship team, said he'd received many emails from his former teammates — all thrilled that they'd be honoured by the city's sports community.

"I do think it started a tradition at UNB," said MacLean of his team's national championship, which was the first for the V-Reds hockey team.

"There were a lot of traditions before that too. We like to think we helped get it to where it is today."

MacLean, who's a part of the organizing committee for the upcoming Canadian Interuniversity Sport men's hockey nationals, which kicks off at the Aitken University Centre next Thursday, said this year's V-Reds are looking good heading into the University Cup.

"I think they've got a lot of depth," said MacLean, who played four seasons with UNB. "They don't seem to be complacent at all, from winning last year. There are a lot of new guys, and that's always nice, to push everyone else."

Stairs, who was recently chosen for the province's sports hall of fame, spent 19 seasons in Major League Baseball, and holds records for most teams played for and pitch-hit home runs.

He earned a World Series ring in 2008 as a member of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Seymour was raised in Fredericton and became known as one of the city's all-around athletes, excelling at both baseball and hockey.

On the rink, he won a Maritime championship with the Sussex Junior Rangers in 1954-55, and later won a provincial title with the Intermediate Caps.

Rick and Margie Stocker are being inducted for their contributions to the track and field and cross country community.

The two are esteemed officials, having worked dozens of national and international track meets over the course of their careers, which began in the late 1960s.

Rick earned the Athletics New Brunswick award for Official of the Year in 1996, while Margie received the honour the following year. They shared the award in 2009.

Frank Jardine is this year's recipient of the Bill MacGillivray Award for Fredericton's outstanding sport volunteer and community worker, while major junior hockey player Zack Phillips will receive the Myer and Jack Budovitch Trophy as the city's athlete of the year. Phillips helped the Saint John Sea Dogs win the Memorial Cup and was drafted 28th overall by the NHL's Minnesota Wild.

With the Delta undergoing renovations, the dinner and induction ceremony will be held Saturday, May 5, at 6:30 p.m. at the Fredericton Convention Centre.

Tickets are \$75 (\$50 for alumni members of the Wall of Fame) and are available at MacTavish for Sports or any Fredericton Sports Investment member. For ticket inquiries contact Tim Gillies at 458-3180 during the day.