



Our Alumni in the News

Olympic figure skater Elizabeth Manley shares story of overcoming mental illness in Whitby

‘Canada’s sweetheart’ opens up about her struggle with depression leading up to silver medal win at the 1988 Winter Games

by [Parvaneh Pessian](#) Whitby This Week



Olympic figure skater and mental health advocate Elizabeth Manley spoke during Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences' annual general meeting in Whitby June 13. With more than 30 years in amateur and professional figure skating, Manley was the first Canadian female to successfully land a triple-double combination jump in competition. She has participated in two Olympics, six World championships, and has won three national titles. Manley is currently a spokesperson for The Alzheimer's Society of Ottawa, and former spokesperson for Winners Walk of Hope for Ovarian Cancer Canada. She is also an advocate for the Alzheimer's association of Canada and an ambassador for the Health Council of Canada. - Ryan Pfeiffer/Metroland

WHITBY — When Elizabeth Manley looks at the silver medal she won at the 1988 Winter Olympics, what she actually sees is a “gold medal in life.”

That’s because the 52-year-old former Canadian figure skating champion knows what she had to overcome leading up to that day in Calgary when the whole world watched her stunning performance.

“A lot of people only remember me as ... ‘Canada’s sweetheart’ (and) that great moment in Calgary (when) I looked like I had the world in my hands. Many people don’t know really what went on prior to the Olympic

Games,” said Manley, who was the guest speaker at [Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences](#)’ annual general meeting in Whitby on June 13.

Born in Belleville, she grew up in Trenton in an Air Force family where she was the youngest of four children and the only girl. All three of her brothers were avid hockey players, and her parents’ goal was to make them NHL stars.

“I was the little five-year-old in a pink snowsuit that was dragged to the rink every Saturday literally for 13 hours,” she recalled.

In her boredom, Manley hatched up a ploy where she’d go around asking parents for money for hot chocolate. When her mother and father found out, they signed her up for skating lessons to keep her busy. Her natural talent shone through from the start.

“Within the two months that I was doing these classes, the coach came over to my mother ... (and) said, ‘She’s way too good for our classes, here’s all the badges, just take her away.’”

She switched to figure skating and quickly developed a passion for it. When she was 10, her father was transferred to Ottawa, and the family relocated there. Shortly after, her parents announced they were getting divorced, and her father moved to Europe. Instead of dealing with any emotions she may have had about the situation at the time, Manley threw herself into skating.

[Click here to read the rest of the article.](#)

Video of the Month



Came across this DVD with footage of rehearsals for our TV Special - **Highlights of the Ice Capades 1968**. Wanted to share this with everyone, especially those who were in the show that year. Our stars were Rowan & Martin, Joannie Sommers & Harper’s Bizarre. Unfortunately there is no audio but it does include clips from Otto & Maria Jelinek, Tommy Litz, Ingrid Wendl, Ann-Margret & Billy Chapel, Romaine & Steele, Hans Leiter as well as bits and pieces from some of the production numbers from that tour. We may not have found any of the TV specials that we did, so this is the closest I can come up with. Enjoy.

[Click here to view TV Rehearsals – Highlights of 1968](#)

A Special Memory for those who remembered

Tab Hunter and his special connection with Ice Capades



“Summer on Ice” was made in 1961 and featured Ronnie Robertson, Cathy Machado, Aja Zanova and others. Guest hosts were Rosemary Clooney, Tony Randall and a skating Tab Hunter.

[Click here to view ‘Summer on Ice’](#)

Your History Lesson



The Ice Cycles tour started with a bang in 1946 as a co-production between the Ice Capades and Ice Follies. Three years later, the Ice Follies bowed out, leaving the show under the ownership of John H. Harris' company International Ice Attractions, Inc.


Ice Cycle Thriller Londoners 1949

<https://youtu.be/CpcVyCbyAfE>

By the fifties, The Ice Cycles operated primarily in Canada and the northern U.S. but also hit several cities in America's Midwest and West Coast. In short, if the Ice Capades tour didn't stop in a city for whatever reason, the Ice Cycles most likely did. Thanks to a stroke of luck at an antique shop in Great Village, Nova Scotia, I chanced upon a copy of the program of the 1953 tour. I also did a little digging to offer a greater sense of what that

year's tour was all about.

**LARSON-SWALWELL STUDEBAKER
CHOSEN OFFICIAL CAR FOR THE
1953 ICE CYCLES!**



Suzie Winter, left, star of Gypsy Gold, and Margaret Field, right, Candeeella, standing beside an official Studebaker of the 1953 Ice Cycles.

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For starters, in most cities that Ice Cycles stopped during the 1953 season, the show played non-stop matinee and evening shows to packed crowds for days at a time. Some of the stops were longer (an eleven day stop at San Diego's Glacier Garden in November 1952) and others longer (a three day stop at the Ottawa Auditorium in April 1953) but on average the show played in each city for a good five days.



Among the numerous stops were Fresno, Spokane, Portland, Shawinigan, Toledo and Calgary's Stampede Corral. Ticket prices ranged from one to three dollars, with programs going for thirty five cents apiece. The tour travelled with its own musical director, percussionist, organist and conductor and hired orchestras in each city it visited to play as needed.

[Click here to read the rest of the article](#)

More Trips Down Memory Lane

Craig Carr had his own memorable moment while skating in 'Skate In'.

As a Cadet. I found I was a survivor of trials of fire, water and mud. In SKATE IN, a ditsy young mother, a lady in the front row stage L 4th marker decided to breast feed her infant as we moved to " Crazy lights!" and failed to realize how well she was illuminated by the over splash of the arena spotlights, causing a mild sensation amongst the Capets and Cadets doing opening number to the Skater's Waltz. By the time we hit the swing block section, her overt behavior was wrecking our guiding to stage left and attempting to remove her little darling's soiled diapers in her lap during the "challenge block" right in front of my stage Left block, was more of a "reality show" than anyone ever anticipated. As the trombones and French horns blared, the opening number fanfare, it appeared that no one ever heard of the adage, to do things at the right time and place", and certainly NOT at a 5 pm matinee.!!! Ugh!

What were you thinking the first time you stepped on the ice as a member of the world famous Ice Capades?

Dody Baker DeMarchi: (IC 1975-79)

Not that many people can say their childhood dreams come true, but mine did in 1975, when I joined Ice Capades. I started in West Company, rehearsing in Duluth, Minnesota. We had a dress rehearsal during the day before opening night. My friend and roommate, Kim Manning and I went back to the hotel after rehearsal to take a nap before the show. We placed a wakeup call...which we never received. But the ringing of the phone did wake us up, only it was Dolly Pierce, the Line Captain. Everyone was already backstage, except us. Since it was opening night we had a party planned for after the show, so we threw on our party clothes – long gowns and platform shoes!—and ran! We were so scared and upset about being late for our first show. Our hotel was at the top of many hills that we had to run down and we had to cross the railroad tracks. We ran down the hill in those awful platform shoes, holding up our long dresses, and screaming for everyone to get out of our way. Much to my horror, I fell. My momentum and the steepness of the hill made me hit the cement hard, and then I began to roll. By the time I came to a stop my knees, elbows and hands were bleeding. I remember Kim just froze. I got up, not knowing that my dress was ripped, and continued to run. When we arrived backstage, instead of being upset with us, Dolly felt sorry for us.

We were running so late, but I had to clean up my scrapes, freshen my makeup and reapply the long false eyelashes I'd only put on one other time. My hands were shaking so bad I just couldn't get them in the right position. It was ten minutes to show time and I still had to get dressed. When we skated out to our markers during the blackout, I might as well have been looking through a forest of trees, because my lashes were sticking straight out instead of up. Our beacons turned on, and the orchestra started playing, 'Welcome to the Show' by Emerson Lake and Palmer. I forgot all my troubles, realizing my hard work had paid off. I was living my

dream. My first opening night definitely started off on the wrong foot, but once the show began it turned to magic. My Ice Capades years were some of the best in my life.

Georgia McKee (IC 1974-78)

My first performance with Ice Capades was with Continental Company in 1974. As I waited with my fellow performers for the show to begin, standing on the top step of the swaying showcase for the 'S'Wonderful' opening number, arms overhead in the standard showgirl pose, I was gripped with abject fear.

Boy, wow! I couldn't help feeling so sorry for poor Dody when I read her story. I missed all the excitement because I was out for six weeks with a fractured ankle caused by slipping on a pink boa during rehearsals, while Dolly was telling us we needed to be careful not to trip over the boas and get injured. Oops!

Memorable Halloween Picture



1963 – Halloween Party

Photos courtesy of Maria Calderon

Bobby Specht as Ann Liston

Leo Sernic as Wardrobe Lucille

Comments from July Blade

Thank you soooo much! Looove these newsletters and the walks down memory lane :))) xo - **JoJo Starbuck**

Once again good job. – **Gloria Dale-Johnson**

Love getting The Blade, you make it so nice for all of us who want to stay in touch with the amazing life we shared... from so many distant places... I love it! – **Steve Williams**

How can we tell you a million times how much we love getting the Blade – you are so appreciated and thank you so much for bringing back memories of cherished times with cherished friends the years we skated in Ice Capades!! - **Jim and Jennifer Custer**

Upcoming Events



Holiday on Ice

40th Anniversary of the Gold Division

'Alice-Flamenco' Production

Open to skaters from all shows

Las Vegas, NV – September 5-7, 2018

[Click here for registration form](#)

The poster is for a 40th anniversary reunion. At the top left, a gold banner says 'REUNION'. The logo for 'Willy Bietak Productions' is at the top center. Below it, the text reads 'Come share the memories!' in a cursive font, followed by 'CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF Willy Bietak Productions, Inc.' in a mix of blue and white fonts. The event details are 'ONBOARD ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS MAY 25TH TO MAY 28TH, 2019', with an image of the cruise ship. Below that, it says 'FEATURING OUR LATEST SHOWS "1977" & "iSKATE 2.0"'. Two small images show skaters performing. At the bottom, there is a request to share the event, a website link, and contact information: 'reunion@bietakproductions.com', '310-576-2400', and 'bietakproductions.com'.

On **May 25th to May 28th, 2019**, onboard Royal Caribbean's Symphony of the Seas, we will be celebrating 40 years of Willy Bietak Productions. Come join us for this incredible reunion of friends, family, skaters and employees from around the world!!!

Visit <https://www.bietakproductions.com/bietak-celebration/>



<http://www.icetheatre.org/>

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