



Sad News

Skating entrepreneur Tom Collins passes away at age 88

By BARRY WILNER, AP Sports Writer Sep. 1, 2019



To call Tom Collins the father of figure skating tours might be hyperbole. Then again...

"Tommy treated everyone like family," Michelle Kwan, the greatest skater of her generation, said Sunday after learning of Collins' death at his home in Minneapolis at age 88. "I skated for 14 years in his show, and I felt like the daughter he never had."

"Tommy would help any skater. He'd open his wallet to anyone in need. He was very special and we'll miss him dearly."

Kwan and 1988 Olympic champion Brian Boitano spoke on the phone Sunday, sharing both tears and laughs as they recalled their days on "Tommy's Tour," and Collins' role in the lives of so many figure skaters whose careers he helped prolong.

"Tom Collins death marks the end of an era, the golden age of figure skating," Boitano said. "He stood out in the business. He was a man of loyalty, vision, and tremendous generosity."

A former skater in Holiday on Ice, Collins organized an exhibition tour of the United States with world champion skaters in 1969. It was the forerunner of Champions on Ice.

Collins was inducted into the figure skating halls of fame of the United States and Canada — he was born in Canada — and in 2006 sold the U.S. rights to the show.

"We lost our hero, Tom Collins, today," the family said in a statement. "No words can explain how much love and joy he gave us. He shared his fun-loving charismatic personality with everyone he met. He will be dearly missed by all of us, his dear friends and the figure skating community."

Scott Hamilton, the 1984 Olympic champion and himself an entrepreneur in the sport — Hamilton founded Stars on Ice soon after he won the gold medal — called Collins "the greatest impresario of skating."

"There wasn't a champion skater since the 1970s that didn't perform in one of his shows," Hamilton said. "It was at one of his shows in Toledo, Ohio, that I saw championship skating live for the very first time in his World

Champions Tour in 1970. Little did I know I would do my first show with him in 1978, where I bombed and was so embarrassed I left without my \$50 honorarium. Every time I was able to speak publicly about Tommy, I would say that he still owes me \$50."

In addition to his role in figure skating, Collins also handled merchandising for such musical acts as the Beach Boys, Neil Diamond, John Denver, the Blues Brothers and the Cars.

Last spring, skaters and others involved with Champions on Ice held a reunion in Minneapolis to honor Collins.

"It wasn't just the skaters who showed up but the choreographers, the people who did the lighting, everyone who was part of the shows," Kwan recalled. "They all loved Tommy and he treated all of them so well.

"He would call my dad every two weeks just to talk about things. He made all of us feel like part of his family."

Hamilton, a cancer survivor who oversees many charity events, last spent time with Collins about a year ago at Hamilton's Sk8 To Eliminate Cancer show in Minneapolis. Hamilton missed the reunion earlier this year while viewing his son's school play. Collins later called him and said, "It was the greatest night of my life," and the only thing that could've made it better was if Hamilton were able to attend.

"He always called me 'Hamilton!' in a loud voice. He said. 'Hamilton! You missed it!' I loved hearing the joy in his voice for that very special night.

"I haven't cried this hard in a very long time. I will miss him every day for the rest of my life."

Our Alumni in the News

Our very own David Wilson, who skated for 5 years with Ice Capades has been a worldwide choreographer for over 20 years. His talent has been recognized by Skate Canada.



Skate Canada announces Hall of Fame Class of 2019

[Skate Canada announces Hall of Fame Class of 2019](#)

OTTAWA, ON : Skate Canada is pleased to announce four new members into the [Skate Canada Hall of Fame](#). The class of 2019 includes athlete **Veronica Clarke**, and in the professional disciplines, coach **Lee Barkell**, choreographer **David Wilson**, and builder **Audrey Williams**.

Veronica Clarke, of Toronto, Ont., was a skating pioneer in women's singles, pairs, dance and fours. Clarke competed from 1928 to 1938, winning 20 Canadian medals—10 of which were gold—as well as three international medals. With her pair partner Ralph McCreath, Clarke won the 1937 North American Championships, three Canadian Figure Skating Championships and along with McCreath, Constance Wilson-Samuel, and Montgomery Wilson, fours medallists in the 1938 Canadian Figure Skating Championships. Clarke is being honoured posthumously.

Lee Barkell, of Kirkland Lake, Ont., enters the Skate Canada Hall of Fame as a professional. Barkell has been a leading singles and pairs coach since his retirement from competition as a pair skater with his wife Melanie Gaylor. During Barkell's skating career with Gaylor, the pair team won three international competitions. Over the course of his 27-year coaching career, Barkell has coached an extensive list of skaters, including world champion and Olympic medallist Jeffrey Buttle, Olympian and world medallist Gabrielle Daleman, and two-time national champions Michelle Menzies and Jean-Michel Bombardier, and Canadian pair champions Anabelle Langlois and Cody Hay.

David Wilson, a former figure skater born in Toronto, Ont., has worked as a master choreographer for more than 20 years. Wilson's choreography expertise begins from crafting a program, to searching for music, to the end product of seeing a skater perform. He has produced numerous artistic programmes for Olympic, world & national medallists including singles skaters Sasha Cohen, Jeffrey Buttle, Yu-Na Kim, Patrick Chan, Yuzuru Hanyu, Joannie Rochette, ice dancers Marie-France Dubreuil and Patrice Lauzon, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir.

Audrey Williams, from Vancouver, B.C., has served as an official for more than 50 years, first being appointed as a national judge in 1959 and later as a judge for the ISU in 1967. Williams is a role model as a judge, referee, and team leader, especially mentoring pair judges in Canada. She was a team leader at both junior and senior worlds, as well as at the Olympics in 1972. She has sat on several Skate Canada committees over many years. She judged six world championships, four junior worlds and the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer. As a skater, she was a four-time Canadian Figure Skating Championship medallist with pair partner Brian Power. Most recently, she was inducted into the British Columbia Hall of Fame as a Builder in 2011.

Skate Canada is proud to celebrate the achievements of the skating community through the inductions of exceptional members in the Skate Canada Hall of Fame. The exact date and locations of the various inductions will be announced as they become available.





Congratulations Liz Manley & David Rosen who were married June 23, 2019 at the Donald Club in Toronto. Photo appeared in the October 2019 issue of Int'l Figure Skating Magazine.

Reunion Information



[Click here to be taken to the registration link](#)

Candy, Poems...but Little Love

By Jean Sprain Wilson – Free Press Staff Writer



Gloria Lor, Terry Wedell, Glenda Brenner, Jan Wood, Anne Gardhouse

In Rochester, N.Y., a young man invariably sends boxes of candy and writes poems to all the 32 lovelies in the ballet corps of the Ice Capades.

In New Haven, Conn., an impartial fan always sends 32 roses individually wrapped. And in Springfield, Mass., a jewelry merchant thoughtfully dispatches inexpensive little trinkets backstage.

But these vestiges of the once-glorious era of Stage-door Johnnies never lead to love. Indeed, romance is pretty much on ice while you're an Ice Capades glamor girl. So lamented a handful of good skates who arrived here Tuesday loaded down with ironing boards, TV sets, and sewing machines for two weeks of housekeeping in this town.

Along with 75 others, they opened Tuesday night at Olympia and will glide regularly across the ice in ten pound hairdos and spectacular costumes until March 22.

And chances are their male companionship will be confined to the boys in the company.

"And they're spoiled rotten, because the competition is just awful," protested Jan Wood, 25, who was a registered nurse before joining the show four years ago.

"True, we outnumber them two to one, and they're babied to death," sighed black-eyed, black-haired Gloria Lor, 24. She was the second of five young ladies participating in an impromptu bull session about 'love on ice,' shortly before their first show.

"We cook, sew, do their laundry, just about anything," added Gloria who was once a bank teller in Brockville, ON and is now the 'mini-boss' of the 'corps line' which is the ice word for chorus.

They all agreed that this pampering probably ruined these lads as potential husbands. But one of the girls in the bull session, Glenda Brenner, said she took a chance and married one anyway. And she isn't worry. He is Tommy Litz, World's Free Style skating champion.

But getting Tommy to settle for a partner instead of a chorus wasn't easy, Glenda admits.

"I admired him from afar for three years because I couldn't get near him. Then on a Sunday night he asked me to go to a movie and dancing. And that was it."

"Sunday night is usually our night to let down because we have pretty tough schedules of performances on Fridays and Saturdays," explained 21 year old Terry Wedell, who was once a doctor's receptionist in Redondo Beach, CA.

Platinum-haired Anne Margaret Gardhouse, from Vancouver, BC, explained what that big night out is like. "We usually go out in groups so that nobody really needs to pair off."

That ought to suit the boy from St. Louis, who has been wooing skater Jan Wood by mail. "He's jealous of the show," says Jan who met her beau at home, not through the ice show.

Where to go is a problem in most towns because, as Gloria explained, by the time they have finished their last shows and are ready for fun, the community has gone to sleep. That leaves late movies and discotheques.

"But on most nights we just grab a bite to eat, go home and do our laundry and watch Johnny Carson or the late late show on TV." We're really pretty ordinary," added Glenda.

At any rate, the very ordinary ambition of these unmarried ladies who cut such cute figures on ice is to get married and have a family, and being an Ice Capades beauty is a definite handicap.

They whiz by potential Stagedoor Johnnies too fast, they say, to form any lasting impressions. The stage doors are guarded, and busses whisk them in to their hotels or apartments.

"If we do meet somebody nice at a party." Said Gloria sorrowfully, 'we're packing and off to the next town before we find out what he's really like. No we definitely do not have beaux in every port.

And yet, somehow, every spring time there is a rash of engagement parties and showers, and weddings every June. Despite the glacier-like blocks on their icy road to romance, love finds a way.

So long ago but feels like yesterday! Our ageless Ice Capets!



Paige Carroll Scott with Angelique Gandy Conte, Laura Jaeger Faulkner, Sue Packard Rodeghier and Patty Harms.

Upcoming Events



2019 Skate America

October 18 – 20, 2019 - Las Vegas, NV

Ticket & hotel information, [click here](#)

Mini Reunion Perhaps

Grab your skates, Hershey FSC

is looking for alumni to skate in their show.

Hershey FSC Alumni--Sharpen Those Skates! (And also help us hunt down some people).

WE WANT YOU to be part of our 85th Anniversary Show--Riding the Silver Blades – A Carnival on Ice Celebrating 85 Years of the Hershey Figure Skating Club.

To participate or for more info, see our survey link below. You can also contact [Doris Papenfuss](#) or [Melissa Bellon Spittler](#) for more info!

<https://hersheyfigureskating.sportngin.com/register/form/055166333>

It will be held at the Giant Center on the evening of Friday, November 1, 2019. Our club is being honored by the Hershey Derry Township Historical Society as part of their Annual Preservation Dinner. The ice show will be part of the dinner, but ticket sales to just our ice show will be sold to the public.

What can alumni do?

--Skate in an Alumni-only program number in the show. There will be one practice, on October 31, the night before the show. Choreography will accommodate all skating levels.

--Attend a casual alumni dinner/get-together on Thursday night prior to the show.

--Potentially stay in a block of rooms, made available Thursday and/or Friday night (if alumni are interested in staying the weekend in Hershey, HFSC will secure the rooms at a discount rate).

Are you excited? We are! Please share this post with alumni you know!



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

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