

SKATING

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Still Debonair

Love and laughter fill 75th Ice Capades reunion

'Like one big family'

Organizers work hard to re-create Ice Capades magic

A couple of hours before the Ice Capades 75th Diamond Jubilee Gala Banquet at the historic Flamingo hotel on the Las Vegas strip, organizers Gloria Spoden and Sue Rodeghier were still busy finalizing the emcee script, conducting a sound check and going over every last detail of the special evening.

These two women, both proud Ice Capades alums, had spent the past 2½ years working together to make sure that all 430 former ice show alumni and guests had a wonderful and memorable time.

One glance around the huge ballroom that night, and it was abundantly clear that they had succeeded. Pure joy filled the air as multiple generations shared stories and relived experiences from their times with Ice Capades and the other traveling ice shows.

Nothing seemed forced. Although most in attendance hadn't see each other in years, their conversations picked up seamlessly and there was a genuine camaraderie.

Many described it as their college reunion.

For Gloria and Sue, witnessing everyone's happiness and excitement was their payback for a job well done.

Becoming emotional when talking about their efforts, Sue said, "I don't think Gloria and I would do it if we didn't have the love of Ice Capades. For me, it was the best times of my life. For a lot of people, this was our dream come true. You work all of your life to either go to the Olympics or join a famous ice show, and these people were able to do it. I get very emotional about it, because it was like our college."

Sue, a Southern California girl, performed in all three Ice Capades companies from 1980 to 1988. The opportunity to tour the country meant she had to grow up quickly, she said.

"Even though skating is familiar, that's a little part of touring," she said. "You had to learn how to live on your own, the finances and such. When we were on the road, there weren't computers, there weren't cell phones or ATM cards. It was very different back then."

Gloria, who hails from Toronto, skated in the East Company from 1966 to 1971. She performed in all the major cities throughout the United States and in her native Toronto.

"It's been unbelievable," Gloria said about the response she's received from the alumni. "People I don't even know stop me

and thank both of us for what we've done and all the work we've put into it, and I know it comes from their heart."

In organizing the reunion, Gloria took three trips from Canada to Las Vegas to scout out locations to see which property would be the best fit. Sue, a Las Vegas resident, worked with her local connections, and the two exchanged emails almost daily. All along, they tried to keep in mind what the majority of people would enjoy, while staying on a budget and making it affordable.

One of the key resources in pulling everybody together was social media.

"Through Facebook, we found a lot of people and they found us," Gloria said. "Because of social media, we kind of know now what's going on in their lives. It's helped us get the word out and they passed it on to everyone else. I put out a monthly (electronic) newsletter called *The Blade*. In the last few months we tried to get people hyped up and excited about the reunion."

The schedule of events offered a little something for everyone. It included a Hawaiian pool party on the first night, a Mexican fiesta cocktail party on the second night and the gala banquet on the final night, which featured a video that took everyone back to that magical era. Also at the gala were classic photos on display of many of the Ice Capades stars, dating back to the inaugural 1940s decade.

To spice things up even more on the final day, attendees took part in a flash mob performance to Pharrell Williams' song "Happy" outside of the Flamingo.

At the end of the gala, people embraced with the promise of staying in touch and seeing each other at the next reunion.

"At this point in our lives, we are like one big family," Gloria said.



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Reunion attendees cut loose during a flash mob outside the Flamingo. Sarah Kawahara choreographed the fun number to Pharrell Williams' hit song "Happy." Check out the video at icecapadesreunion2015.com

Mr. Debonair, '40s Ice-Capets stroll down memory lane

by TROY SCHWINDT

Under the groove of the feel-good anthem "Happy," two energetic groups fill the street and converge with intent. Hands are clapping in time over their heads, hips are swaying, and smiles cover their faces. Tourists stop and set their phones to record.

It's a flash mob in Las Vegas.

But on closer look, this well-choreographed group skews a bit older than some crazy college kids on spring break. Many in the group have gray hair, are still fit and definitely know how to play the crowd.

A few T-shirts give away the group's identity: It's the Ice Capades 75th Diamond Jubilee Celebration.

Once performers, always performers.

For three days in late June, this special group gathered at the Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel and Casino to rekindle friendships and reminisce about the precious time they shared performing in traveling ice shows.

While the focus was on the Ice Capades event, all those who skated in the many famous traveling ice shows were invited to come celebrate. The turnout was phenomenal: More than 430 past performers and their guests made the trip to Las Vegas.

But as always, one man stood out from the crowd.

"That was fun," Richard Dwyer, 79, said as he dabbed his brow after performing with the flash mob outside the Flamingo. "I didn't do too well. I was trying to follow the people in front of me, but I was about four counts behind."



Dwyer, better known as “Mr. Debonair,” became the indisputable star of these ice shows starting in 1950. Playing arenas from New York’s Madison Square Garden to the Los Angeles Coliseum and many in between, Dwyer’s rock star reputation in the 1950s and ’60s made him a Hollywood A-lister.

Joining Dwyer at this desert reunion were four of the early “Ice-Capets” — Margaret Field Beard, Betty Heiss Barnes, Lois Ann McCormick Taylor Parnell and Lucile Miller Creighton, who left their mark during the 1940s and beyond with the Ice Capades and other ice shows.

Dwyer, who spent 30 years (1950–1980) with the Ice Follies and 13 more years with Ice Capades, still glows when he talks about the glamorous skaters, the elaborate production sets and costumes, the intricately orchestrated routines — all melded to entertain families across the nation for much of the 20th century.

“We had 32 girls and 14 guys. That era of the ice shows was so fantastic and glamorous,” said Dwyer, who started in the ice show business at age 14. “We spent the first 18 years traveling by train. There were 97 of us traveling in six Pullman cars. We then started flying and we’d truck the props.

Mr. Debonair Richard Dwyer and 1940s Ice-Capets (l-r) Betty Heiss Barnes, Lois Ann McCormick Taylor Parnell, Lucile Miller Creighton and Margaret Field Beard take part in a photo shoot while at the Ice Capades 75th Diamond Jubilee Celebration in Las Vegas. “This is very special and I think it’s unique to get this group together and celebrate,” Dwyer said. “I feel like the lucky guy, still. I’m very fortunate.”



Top, Mr. Debonair and the Dwyer Girls perform at Madison Square Garden; Betty Heiss Barnes stays in formation during the group’s “Manual of Arms” routine.



Top, Ice Capades cast members Lois Ann McCormick Taylor Parnell and Phil Taylor wed in a 1952 ceremony; Middle, Lucile Miller Creighton displays the glamour of the traveling ice show; Bottom, Margaret Field Beard delights audiences from coast to coast and internationally.



"The moments, the traveling, the camaraderie, the friendships were all part of that incredible time."

As Mr. Debonair, Dwyer wore a top hat and tails. A former U.S. novice and junior champion (1948 and '49), his double jumps and famous spread eagle always brought cheers from the crowd.

Among the show's signature highlights was Dwyer gliding across the ice accompanied by six beautiful women dubbed "The Dwyer Girls." As both men and women swooned, Dwyer would give away a dozen roses at each show, always handing one to a grandmotherly type seated in the front row.

Sue Rodeghier, a Dwyer Girl in the 1980s, remembers how special it was to perform with the legendary Mr. Debonair.

"It's amazing to be one of those many who were part of that," said Rodeghier, one of the reunion organizers. "You never think that you are going to be included in that, and then when you are asked to do it, it's such an honor. To this day, he knows who I am and knows I was one of his girls."

ICE-CAPET MEMORIES: Margaret & Lois Ann meet royalty

Margaret Field Beard and Lois Ann McCormick Taylor Parnell entered the traveling ice show business in the latter half of the 1940s.

Field Beard, who was an accomplished competitive singles and pairs skater, played the leads, such as Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood and

Cinderella, in many of the iconic productions in her time with Ice Capades International.

"Whatever Donna Atwood did in the other Ice Capades show, I did," said Field Beard, who spent 13 years with Ice Capades. "A couple of times I skated with Bobby Specht at the Convention Hall in Atlantic City when she didn't want to skate."

During those early years, she also performed with the popular and charismatic Jimmy Lawrence, her husband of 13 years. They had two children, James and Kathy.

Field Beard later married Marshall Beard, who had skated with the legendary Sonja Henie.

"When my children grew a little taller, we went out together as a family act with Holiday on Ice," Field Beard said. "My son and daughter did a pairs act and Kathy did a solo."

While with Holiday on Ice, they ventured to South America and did shows in Argentina and Rio de Janeiro. They later rejoined Ice Capades and performed their family act for three more years.

One of Field Beard's fondest memories is performing for Jordan's King Abdullah I in London.

"He came to the show three times and sat in the front row," Field Beard said. "He said it was the best show he had ever seen."

Field Beard also skated in Ice Capades shows in Canada for 10 years, and did many milk and Wonder Bread ads.

"All of this was included in our contract," she said.

Today, Field Beard lives in Santa Clarita, California, with her daughter, who enjoyed a six-year career with Ice Capades.

"I walk every day," she said. "That's what keeps me going."

Taylor Parnell, like Field Beard, played the lead in many numbers with the Ice Capades.

"I was the tallest girl in the show, so that was my claim to fame," she joked.

Traveling the world stands out as one of the best memories of her skating days. With the show, she traveled to London in 1949 and 1950, where the cast spent four or five months each time.

"It was just a wonderful experience," she said. "We had time off so we could go to France, and we went to Paris, Switzerland and Ireland. Everybody had stories to tell."

While performing in England, the show's cast got to meet Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

"He came to the show and sat in the box by himself," Taylor Parnell said. "We all knew he was there. Everybody kind of played up to him. Very charming. We met him as a group. He came down and said hello to us. It was very nice."

Taylor Parnell met her first husband, Phil Taylor, while with the show. Phil and his daughter, two-time World champion Megan Taylor, joined the Ice Capades in 1942.

The couple, who married in 1952, had two children, Stephen and Phil.

Taylor was popular for his stilt skating act, which he originated. As a performer, he represent-

The chorus line of the 1942 Ice Capades perform the show's finale titled, "Aire Militaire."



PHOTO COURTESY ROY BLAKES' ICESTAGE ARCHIVE



ed Johnnie Walker (a brand of Scotch whiskey) for several years. He wore its costume, which included high black boots.

"Wherever he went, when he was representing Johnnie Walker, they sent him a case of Johnnie Walker whiskey," Taylor Parnell said. "For him, that was great."

Taylor Parnell skated until 1953 and then joined her husband, who had been named a road manager for the Ice Capades.

"I still had my hand in it," Taylor Parnell said. "A lot of kids called me Mom. I was a good sounding board for a lot of them. Some of them who attended the reunion came up to me and said, 'Phil Taylor was the best manager I ever had.' It was nice to hear those comments."

Taylor battled cancer during this time and he passed away from the disease in 1959.

After his passing, the Ice Capades' owner John H. Harris asked Taylor Parnell to come back to the show as a performance director, but having two young sons prevented her from accepting the offer. She instead moved back to Canada, got remarried and had a daughter, Jane.

She, however, kept in touch with the show for many years, venturing 200 miles south to Duluth, Minnesota, where Ice Capades West rehearsed each year.

"I used to go down there for opening night and reacquaint with some of those I skated with," Taylor Parnell said. "This went on as long as they were there. Then I started going to Skate Canada and met some very good skating friends. Now with the Ice Capades reunion, I reconnected with some of my friends and it's been great."

ICE-CAPET MEMORIES: Lucile & Betty support the war effort

Lucile Miller Creighton and Betty Heiss Barnes joined the Ice Capades in the early 1940s and recall what the show meant to all of the U.S. service men and women during World War II.

"With the war, things changed so radically," Creighton, who spent 40 years with ice shows, said. "It did for us, too. We always took collections for the soldiers and many times we had private cars but had to give them up [for the war effort]. It was quite a time when I think back on those days and how cold it was. We all enjoyed having the opportunity to be helpful for the war and we felt we were."

Barnes said the Ice Capades show entertained countless troops over the years. She remembered an Army sergeant who taught the women the "manual of arms" each morning in a parking lot.

"Well, our shoes got worn out," Barnes said. "He did the job and on the opening night of the show, we did that number. He was sitting in the front row and every girl who went by him noticed that he was sitting there with tears running down his face. He was such a hard-boiled sergeant and he could be tough on us, but he was sitting there crying because those were *his* girls."

Creighton, who today lives in Mission, Texas, was a line skater and had a bicycle act, too. She recalled falling on her face during a kick line and

ended up sliding under a spectator's chair in the first row.

"He had to get up and pick up the chair so I could get up, and everybody roared," she said. "I didn't get hurt, but it was quite something to see. We had a rehearsal after the show that lasted three hours to teach us that no matter what happens, or who falls, you never laugh, you never laugh."

Creighton, who also spent many years with Holiday on Ice, wore many hats with the traveling ice shows, including being the paymaster. She was responsible for paying all of the show's bills, including making sure that all the performers received their paychecks.

"They loved me for that," she said.

"I have no regrets and I'm happy to have the experiences I did with ice skating. I wouldn't trade those for anything in this world," Creighton added.

Barnes, who resides in Cleveland, looks back fondly on her years with the Ice Capades, which lasted from 1941 to the mid-1950s. Some of the great performers she worked with included Bobby Specht, Donna Atwood, Red McCarthy, Phil Taylor and the "Old Smoothies" Orrin Markhus and Irma Thomas.

"I was doing something I loved and it was a great time," said Barnes, who went on to teach skating for 21 years in Euclid City, Ohio, after leaving the Ice Capades.

One of Barnes' most vivid memories from the Ice Capades took place on Thanksgiving Day in Buffalo, New York, where Specht and Joe Jackson Jr. took liberties with their number to *Scheherazade*. Specht was the prince and Jackson the king.

"Bobby was with the king's daughter and he was bringing a jewel box to give to the king," Barnes said. "He handed the king the jewel box and he opened it up and pulled out a great, big turkey. We roared. The audience thought it was hysterical, but we all got fined for it."

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

For Dwyer, the reunions provide a golden opportunity to see the people who made his career special.

"It's been five years [since the last reunion] and it seems like yesterday when you see them again," he said. "I had the advantage of being around so long and I've watched so many of them grow up that I can't decide which year to put them in. They all look so great!"

Dwyer, who still skates four or five days a week at Pickwick Ice in Burbank, California, remains involved with the current generation of skaters, supporting them at National Showcase, Theatre on Ice and other events.

"I feel like a groupie," he joked. "I think it's important. I remember how happy I was when I was encouraged as a skater. I like to be there. It's a thrill. I also still love to go out and skate during the adult sessions; I love those people who are competing. I love to encourage them, and I have to get out of their way when they are doing their numbers. We just laugh and have fun."

Looking back, Dwyer said it was the spirit of

the performers and the enduring friendships that truly made the shows special.

"There was that pride, that working together and everyone enjoying seeing the other guy do well," he said. "So many people have touched my life."

BROWN MCRAE WINS GALA AUCTION PRIZE

Former Ice Capades skater Bobbi Brown McRae enjoyed the Ice Capades 75th Diamond Jubilee gala with fellow alum and friend, Jean Yun, as winners of the U.S. Figure Skating-sponsored reunion auction.

Brown McRae, a former competitive skater with the All Year FSC and the Santa Monica FSC, retired in 1982 from competitive skating to tour with the Ice Capades. From there, she came back home and began coaching.

"In 2005 I started a skating program and began sponsoring children and young adults at local Los Angeles orphanages and care facilities to share my love of the sport," she said.

In May, Brown McRae noticed the auction item online and acted.

"I thought what a great way to go to my first reunion in 32 years and help out the U.S. Figure Skating scholarship program and figure skaters across America," she said.

Brown McRae's guest for the event was Yun, who came to America to train with John Nicks in 1972. She is the Korean champion, a 1976 Olympian and Ice Capades star from the early 1980s.

Jean Yun, Mr. Debonair Richard Dwyer and Bobbi Brown McRae at the Ice Capades reunion





by TROY SCHWINDT, photos by ZACKERY WILLIAMS

Holly and David Kirby fell in love while touring with Ice Capades

Like everyone else who attended the Ice Capades 75th Diamond Jubilee Celebration, David Kirby cherished the chance to see old friends and remember that special time in his life.

"Ice Capades gave all of us here something, but I'm the most lucky one because it gave me Holly (his wife of 38 years)."

The Kirbys met during their time together while touring the country as performers in the West Company in 1976. As close friends, Holly would wish David good luck (they called it a "do a goodie") before he would perform his routine.

"It became a superstition before the show," said David, whose mother and father were fixtures in the ice show business. "Then one day I was getting ready for the show and I couldn't find Holly. I was running all over looking for her before I finally found her."

Their strong friendship grew into a courtship and eventually marriage during Christmastime in 1977.

One of their favorite memories about touring together with Ice Capades was when they bought a trailer and hit the road with some of their fellow performers.

"There weren't many of us who did that, but for those who did we would caravan and that was a lot of fun," Holly said. "We felt like we experienced more of the traveling and seeing the United States that way."

When looking back at that golden time, Holly and David count themselves lucky to have met so many wonderful and talented people, including the legendary Russian pairs team of Ludmila and Oleg Protopopov.

They had defected from Russia and came directly to the Ice Capades.

"At first, I was like, 'I'm the headliner pairs and who are these Russians?'" David said. "Well, the Protopopovs taught me more about skating than many of the mentors that I had. They really took us under their wing and helped us. I really learned a great deal from all the people I associated with, and I really think that's where I got my education from skating was from the Ice Capades, because I always got to tour with new champions."

Ice Capades greets such as Freddie Trenkler, Terry Head and his wife Gisela, and many others, left an indelible impression on the couple.

"We had the opportunity to work with people who were icons in the show and that was really special," Holly said.

Today, Holly and David own and operate the Galleria Ice Skating Center in Dallas. They have two children, 33-year-old daughter Sarah and 26-year-old son Zachary, and two grandchildren. David is also an IJS technical specialist.

For Holmes, Ice Capades was a family affair

The week before the reunion, Julie Lynn Holmes (Newman) watched her youngest child graduate from high school.

"I had a 40-year span of raising four kids, so it was time to start a new chapter," Holmes, a coach and national technical specialist in San Diego, said. "This is my first reunion, and it's been amazing."

Holmes, a four-time U.S. silver medalist, two-time World medalist and 1972 Olympian, joined the Ice Capades after the Olympics and performed in the West Company through 1975.

"We were so sheltered as competitive skaters in this very naïve bubble, so walking into this show biz world, it was a little culture shock at first," Holmes said. "You just grew to love these skaters as your family, because you were together 24/7 and traveled together, experienced the ups and downs and challenges of life. It really was a family, so I grew to love them and had a good time."

Holmes enjoyed the tours immensely, especially the finale in Honolulu.

"It was always a treat," she said. "We were allowed to kind of play around a little bit since it was the closing show. For one number I had been made the sweetheart of the Navy and wore this short, little Navy skirt. The guys would take it off at one point and I would come back out wearing a little grass skirt."

Canadian stars Karen Magnussen and Sarah Kawahara, and JoJo Starbuck and Ken Shelley are just some of the performers that Holmes fondly remembers from those glory days.

"JoJo has been my lifetime roomie, and to room with her again here has been like going back in time," Holmes said.

"It's just skating; it's this common bond that never breaks," she added. "It's a beautiful golden thread that unites us all. It's been so much fun."

Holmes coaches in La Jolla, California, at the University Town Center.

"I'm weaning myself to just a couple of days a week," she said. "I love the kids and just love being on the ice."

Holmes worked on the technical panel at the 2015 U.S. Championships in Greensboro. It marked the first time she'd been back to the U.S. Championships since 1972.

Kawahara puts on a show in Las Vegas

Sarah Kawahara put everyone in a great mood right around lunchtime with her choreography to Pharrell Williams' hit song "Happy," as part of a flash mob outside the doors of the Flamingo.

More than 300 Ice Capades attendees took part in the dance number, which was well-received by all standing obliviously outside of the historic casino.

"I wanted to do something that everybody could enjoy, because the age span is quite wide for this reunion," Kawahara, a two-time Emmy Award winner for choreography, "I just wanted to do something that everybody



could be part of and not be intimidated by. It was fun."

Kawahara, who enjoyed a solid competitive skating career in Canada, auditioned for the Ice Capades at age 17 after a talent scout discovered her. She immediately was given a solo number and did understudy work for one of the prominent principal skaters.

"I loved performing and skating for the Ice Capades (1972–80)," Kawahara said. "I became known as the dramatic, emotional skater and I also did light humor, so I was able to explore the theatrical side of my skating, which I loved."

As a choreographer, Kawahara wanted to create shows that would highlight that type of skater. She worked for Bob Turk, who was the producer and director of Ice Capades.

"After I left the show, he invited me back to choreograph a production number for the opening of the Ice Capades," she said. "That was my first big opportunity to have 45 skaters at my disposal to do a Beatles medley, so that was really exciting."

Later on, she teamed with Willy Bietak and eventually choreographed and directed shows for the Ice Capades.

She went on to work with many skating greats, such as Peggy Fleming and Scott Hamilton. Her first Emmy came in 1997 when she choreographed Hamilton's TV special titled "Scott Hamilton Upside Down." The award meant a lot to both Kawahara and Hamilton, as they had spent many years working together during Hamilton's professional career.

"I never went to the Olympics so it was like my Olympic medal, winning the Emmy for that TV special," she said.

Her Emmy for the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City was another crowning moment.

"It was two years of my life working on that project (titled 'The Fire Within')," Kawahara said. "It was an opportunity for me to use all of my knowledge, from arena production work to stars shows to ice stage work and television specials."

Forty TV cameras brought the ceremonies to billions of people globally.

"It was a great experience and so exciting to use everything within my brain," Kawahara said.

Coming back for the reunion, she said, is amazing.

"Time kind of stands still when you do show work, and with the new generation of show skaters and the old generation of show skaters, we have such a common base that we all draw on," she said.

Ice show tradition runs deep in Patterson family

Ice Capades alums Julie Patterson and her sister, Lisa, attended the reunion not only for themselves, but also for their mother, who couldn't make it because of heart issues.

"We went looking for some of her former roommates and show

people that she toured with," Lisa said. "It was great for Julie and me to meet those ladies last night and put them in contact with our mother. Hopefully our mom can make the next reunion."

Julie and Lisa are in the middle of three family generations of ice show performers. Their parents, Jane Tinsley and Clem Patterson, who hailed from Regina, Saskatchewan and Victoria, British Columbia, toured in the Ice Cycles shows in the 1950s.

Julie, who is the vice president of programming and skating at the Ice Dens in Scottsdale and Chandler, Arizona, joined Ice Capades in 1983 and filled many roles until the show's final performance in 1997.

"I was a chorus skater first and a principal skater for nine years and then became performance director, so I really had a taste of everything," Julie said.

Lisa was with the Ice Capades in 1984–85. She was the understudy to one of the principal soloists.

"There was a flying component of the show and I got to audition and fly over the top of the audience, so that was fun," Lisa said.

Their older brother's daughters, Tara and Shawna Patterson, have been involved with Disney on Ice. Tara is now in her 12th year with the company and is the performance director. Shawna spent five years with Disney.

When looking back on their family's time with the traveling ice shows, Julie and Lisa agree it's the friendships that develop that are most meaningful.

"You are on the road nine straight months and you really become a family," Julie said.



Starbuck and Shelley relish Ice Capades experience

While JoJo Starbuck and Ken Shelley enjoyed a stellar competitive career together in the early 1970s — they won three U.S. pairs titles, competed at two Olympic Winter Games and won two World bronze medals (Ken also won the 1972 U.S. singles title) — being part of the Ice Capades was truly a childhood dream come true.

As 7-year-olds in California, Starbuck and Shelley skated in shows and recitals together in a tiny studio rink before embarking on their competitive careers.

"When we met, I was a tomboy and loved theater, too," Starbuck said. "So I would put on plays in the garage and build sets, do make-up and create costumes; I'd make the neighborhood kids be in the shows and invite the parents to come watch."

"And when I met Kenny, he was doing the same thing in his garage across town in Downey, California. So when we joined Ice Capades, it was amazing because there was a real costume department. They were making our costumes, the incredible scenic department was making sets and special effects, and there were the choreographers, directors and live musicians. We had a full orchestra in every town. It was a childhood dream come true."

Starbuck and Shelley were part of the East Company, which was



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Janette Chechowski
and Steve Williams
*Good luck and follow your
dreams. The best sport in the
world.*

Jared R. Hoadley
*Thanks to the Memorial Fund I
was able to keep skating.*

Linda Landui
Best of luck to all of you.

Dawn Wagner-Johnson
Reach for the stars!

Michele Urbany-Puluti
Never give up!

Liv Lunde Ramos
*I'm honored to be sharing the
RISE video with my skating
students. They need to know this
story.*

Chris and Dick Shedlowski
Keep going!

Phil Taylor
Follow your dreams.

the company that originated the show that was eventually passed on to the other companies to perform. They rehearsed all summer in Atlantic City, New Jersey, at the Convention Hall.

"Putting the show together and being with all of the creative people was a lot of fun," Shelley said. "And then you start doing the show and the tour. Those relationships and times with everyone are cherished memories as well.

"We say that while most kids go off to college, we went off to the ice show. This is where we did our growing up."

"This is like our college reunion," Starbuck said.

After their time in Ice Capades from 1972 to 1976, Starbuck and Shelley made a few guest appearances in the show, did a lot of television work and performed on Broadway: Starbuck in John Curry's show and Shelley in Toller Cranston's production.

At the reunion, Starbuck and Shelley spent every moment possible visiting with old friends and meeting new ones.

"We reminisce about all those times and people in our lives, the people we toured with, the people we competed against, and it's so intertwined," Shelley said.

"When you are a skater, whether you are with Ice Capades or in the Olympics or just a skater who goes through their tests, skating is a special bond and brings people together," Starbuck said. "For the rest of your life you have a very close, unique family that you love and understand. Even if you haven't talked in 30 years, you get together and you have that wonderful bond."

Johnson looks back fondly on skating career

Lynn-Holly Johnson spent just a half season with Ice Capades in 1977-78, but the reunion made it feel like it was much longer.

"What a great, tight group," Johnson said of the Ice Capades alums. "We are such a family, because 80 percent of us had this unusual upbringing as a skater and it keeps you close."

Johnson, the 1974 U.S. novice silver medalist, grew up outside of Chicago and starred in dozens of commercials and movies as a child. She moved to Newport Beach, California, to continue her competitive career.

"I was a junior in high school and packed my bags and went to train under John Nicks and Gary Visconti. It was a great move and I have never left there."

In 1977, Johnson joined Ice Capades before embarking on an acting career.

While still with the Ice Capades, the 19-year-old was being sought by producers to costar in

a movie titled *Ice Castles*. After a successful screen test, she returned to the Ice Capades show, where she roomed with sisters Kitty and Heidi DeLio.

"I said to Kitty and Heidi, 'There's nudity in this script and I'm not doing that. I'm happy here doing Ice Capades.' They were pretty disappointed and we talked about having to get the nudity out (of the script) and me pursuing the role.

"I remember pretty specifically when Kitty said, 'There's a pay phone downstairs, you go call the director and tell them you are doing it. You have to do this.' So I remember where the pay phone was in Columbus, Ohio, in the Ramada. I called the director and said, 'I'll do it.'"

Assured that there wouldn't be any nudity, Johnson was surprised to learn that halfway through shooting that the writers rewrote a scene, which included her taking off her blouse.

"I said, 'No! I'm not doing that.' They couldn't believe I was standing up to a Hollywood production. The producer yelled at me, saying I was costing him \$25,000 every couple hours because the director wouldn't work. Two days later, they rewrote the scene and we finished the movie.

"It makes me feel like a million bucks because when people compliment me on the movie now, they usually say it was a great family movie, and that's because this little kid from Chicago stuck to her guns."

Johnson, today a wife and mother of two, went on to star in dozens of movies and TV shows, including being one of James Bond's girls in *For Your Eyes Only*.

Filmmaker Keri Pickett and her uncle Roy Blakey have given skating fans a backstage pass into the unique history of the traveling ice show era with their movie titled *The Fabulous Ice Age*. The DVD is available for purchase by sending a check made out Pickett Pictures LLC for \$25. Pickett will autograph the cover of the DVD. Send checks to Keri Pickett at Pickett Pictures LLC, 413 East Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55414-1005. Blakey, a former show skater, collected thousands of pieces of ice show memorabilia during his time as a performer.





Above, a trio of skating sisters enjoy the reunion. Front row, Gloria Burling Zahn and Glena Burling; middle row, Heidi DeLio Thibert, Becky DeLio Trampler, Kitty DeLio LaForte; Back row, Lisa Illsley Navarro, Linda Illsley Far left, Always a class act, Mr. Debonair Richard Dwyer blends into the Las Vegas landscape. From right, Denise Miller Cheetah Tschida, Nancy Klován Mariani and her friend and Laurie Wortman celebrate the traveling ice show era at the evening's Diamond Jubilee gala. Below, the Ice Capades reunion brings back many memories for everyone, including (l-r) Roger Bass, JoJo Starbuck, John Nicks and Ken Shelley.

