

## Sad News

Melissa Militano Warkmeister, a three-time U.S. pairs champion and 1972 Olympian, passed away in Las Vegas on Tuesday, July 16. She was 69.

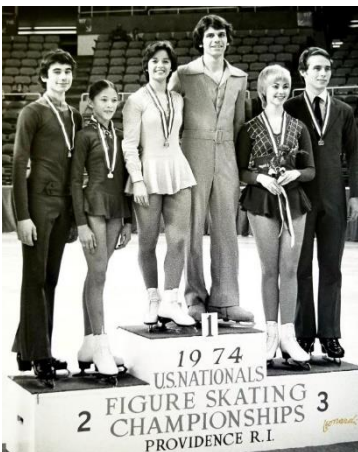


The skating world lost Melissa Militano to a brief battle with lymphoma. Melissa was a singles and pair champion who was truly a pioneer of U.S. Figure Skating. Melissa was one of the first female skaters in the world to consistently land triple jumps and did so to win the bronze in junior ladies in 1970 and the junior title the next year at the 1971 U.S. Figure Skating Championships. Known for her steadiness and consistency, Militano earned her first U.S. pairs

title with brother, Mark, in 1973, and won two more with Johnny Johns in 1974 and 1975. She and her brother placed seventh at the 1972 Games in Sapporo, Japan. She competed at seven consecutive World Championships (1969-1975).

Her coaches included Peter Dunfield and Ron Ludington. After retiring from competitive skating in 1975, Militano performed in the **Ice Capades** for four years.

She and husband Randy Warkmeister have one daughter, Kelly, and two grandsons. A date for a celebration of life will be announced in the near future.



Melissa Militano and Johnny Johns, US Pair Champions '74 and '75. Melissa was one of the fiercest pair skating women ever. Huge throws and twists, the higher the better for her! It was our honor (Tai's and mine) to be their runners-up for 2 years.

Melissa, rest in peace, fly with the angels which you will love and they will adore you. Love you. Randy

[Erika Susman Shorr](#) and Tommy. ❤️ All three of these teams went on to **Ice Capades** into their professional careers.

Melissa Militano/Johnny Johns, Tai Babilonia/Randy Gardner, Erika Susman/Thomas Huff

## Sharon Holmes – July 6, 2024



From Donna Good - I just received an email from Phill Mandel, Sharon Holmes husband, Sharon was a long-time member of **Ice Capades Int.** And my roommate for quite some time. She did attend a few re unions, but not the last ones. She has been living in Las Vegas for many years. We have kept in touch and been good friends for about 60 yrs. Although living a long distance apart. She was 89 yrs. Old.

[Link to Memorial page](#)

## Irene Violet (Bailey) Sellers – July 2024



Irene Sellers made the world a more joyous place. Although she was many things, she was born to entertain, a gifted dancer and performer, and her artistic passions anchored her life. Irene studied tap dancing, ballet and figure skating in England as a young girl, becoming a professional ice skater at the age of 12. A remarkable young talent, she skated with the Spanish Circus at the age of 15. In 1958, at the age of 18, she was hired by the **Ice Capades** and brought to the U.S. on board the HMS Queen Mary. As a featured ice dancer, she toured widely in North America until her marriage to Merwin Ernstein in 1960. Settling in Canoga Park and starting a family, she hung up her skates to become a homemaker and mother with the birth of daughters Bonnie in 1962 and Heather in 1967.

Born Irene Violet Bayley on October 18, 1940 to Violet “Vi” and George “Bill” Bayley in Brighton England, her family endured the privations and terrors of World War II. A target of opportunity for German aircraft on London bombing missions, Brighton suffered fifty-six aerial attacks between July 1940 and February 1944. Among the fortunate, Irene’s immediate family members survived the conflict. During the go-go years of raising her family, she participated in PTA and Girl Scouts.

<https://www.ocregister.com/obituaries/irene-violet-sellers-mission-viejo-ca/>

## Our Alumni in the News

Did you know?

Jacqueline du Bief



The first skater from France to win a gold medal in the women's event at the World Figure Skating Championships, and the 1952 Olympic bronze medalist. Jacqueline du Bief who was born on December 1930 is a French retired figure skater who competed mainly in single skating. She is the 1952 Olympic bronze medalist, the 1952 World champion, a three-time European medalist, and a six-time French national champion (1947–1952).

Bief was born in Paris. As a pair skater, she competed with Tony Font, winning the 1950 & 1951 French national titles. After turning professional, she toured with several shows like **Ice Capades**, Hollywood Ice Revues, Scala Eisrevue from 1952 to 1964. In 1964 she returned to France where she went back to school.

She was called weak in figures, but innovative free skater. du Bief greatest figure skating moment came in 1952, shortly after she had won a bronze medal at the Oslo Olympics, when she won the World Championship in Paris. Although du Bief landed the first-ever double Lutz by a woman, it was a controversial victory as she fell twice during her free skate. She was given a 6.0 by one judge despite this, and even the French fans pelted the ice with various items to protest the decision. Du Bief later wrote in her book *Thin Ice*, that American Sonya Klopfer deserved the title.

## Synthetics Sparkle on Ice



The beauty of the costumes of Ice Capades is always one of the big attractions of the ice show. Marilyn Hughes, of the company, is shown with four dolls dressed in the glittering, glamorous models of costumes for this year's show. Designers have used synthetic fabrics, aluminum mesh.

New synthetic fabrics –and some materials that are not fabrics at all – have transformed the art of the costumer.

Show-business designers are now using metal and plastic, and pliers instead of needles and thread, to create lavish costumes for theatrical productions.

The new materials have been particularly suitable for ice-show costumes because traditional fabrics have often become limp in the humidity of an ice rink or were too heavy for skaters to wear and still be mobile. Designer Bill Campbell used aluminum mesh, for example, for the costumes for a mod opening in this year's show.

And he's used synthetic foam and vinyl for the animal number and mylar fringes (from a distance, they look like cellophane but are more durable) for a ballet sequence in the show.

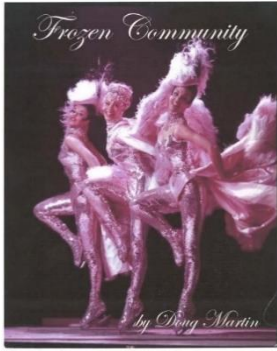
Before any of Campbell's designs were created for live skaters, Kay Buckley made them up in doll-size; some of the dolls are shown on this page.

The dolls and their gowns are for display but also save money. Errors in design and execution can be corrected in the mini-version before the adult-size is made up, Mrs. Buckle said.





# Reliving Fond memories



Doug Martin had published two books called 'Frozen Community' where he wanted to have skaters tell funny stories about their time on the road. Stories were posted before but worth sharing again.

Here is one of Doug's own favorite memories –



In 1959, when I first joined Ice Capades, I was in the Ice Cadets chorus. Within five months they assigned me to be Freddie Trenkler's stooge in both of his comedy numbers in each show. I retained that position for eight years. I learned a lot about life from Freddie, as he was an extremely smart man when it came to investments, national and international. I wish I'd paid more attention to the information he shared with me back then. He encouraged me when I decided to put an adagio number together with Elyn Tia. She and I ended up having our own number for a couple years, while Freddie and I continued to work together in his comedy routines. Freddie's wife, Gigi, was from France, and I enjoyed speaking to her now and then in French, which I learned in my hometown of Montreal, Canada. I knew that Freddie is missed very much by his former show mates, his wife and relatives. I am honored to have had Freddie in my life over the years. Rest in Peace, Freddie.`

I'd like to remember Hans Leiter, who passed away since the first volume of Frozen Community was published. Anyone who knew Hans knew that every encounter with Hans was an occasion to laugh. You always left a conversation with Hans with a good feeling to take you through the day. And if you were out on the town with Hans, it was always a fun time. He loved a good joke – both hearing and telling it. But I got as big a kick out of his Austrian accent as I did the jokes he told. Hans enjoyed his time with Ice Capades, and anyone who worked with him enjoyed it all the more because of Hans. So, it's with great sadness that we say goodbye to our friend. May you rest in peace.

***Let's keep Doug's legacy going. I'm sure there are more 'interesting' stories out there from your time in the show. If you would like to share, please send them to me.***

# Ice Capades 2025 Reunion Cruise Update

Have you made your reservation yet?

Our Ice Capades -Escapades Cruise gathering is getting closer. If you still want to sign up please contact Sheri at [scruiques@aol.com](mailto:scruiques@aol.com)

We can look forward to catching up with old friends and making new ones!

It's getting closer.



You can reach J at [dabatej@bellsouth.net](mailto:dabatej@bellsouth.net)

[Attendee's list as of May 22, 2024](#)

[Click here](#)

'Escapades 2025 Cruise'.... We'll have a good time! 🎵🎵'



Please click below to join the [Escapades 2025 Cruise – events page](#) and get all updates relating to the cruise.

<https://facebook.com/events/s/ice-capades-escapades-cruise-a/746073810575573/>

THIS EVENT IS BEING CREATED AND COORDINATED BY Johnna "J" Bates...

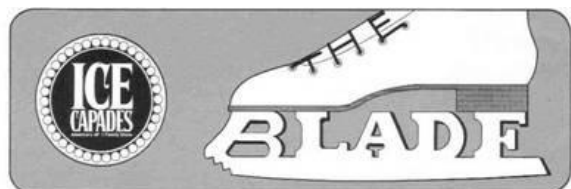
**NOTE: PASSPORTS ARE REQUIRED!**



# Pictures from Past Reunions

## All Skater's Reunion – May 1-3, 2023 Las Vegas

### Ice Capades 2022 Reunion pictures



The website, [www.icecapadestheblade.com](http://www.icecapadestheblade.com) has been revamped and more information has been added. If you have something to add, please send them.

Look here for **2022 Ice Capades Reunion** information, including reunion pictures  
**Cast, Precision & Production Pictures** – Relive some memories.

**Past reunion Pictures** – Check them out for some you may have missed.

**Rosters** – Looking for someone or remembering who you skated with in the show?

**Video links** – have been collecting skating 'You Tube' links from the early years.

**Program Covers** – we had the most beautiful covers

**Past Issues of The Blade** – just in case you missed an issue

**Past Reunion Pictures** – relive the times you attended the reunions

**In Memorium** – remembering those who have left us too soon

Check it out!

## Upcoming Events

### 2024 The Experience Adult Skate Camp

#### Palm Springs

the experience!  
adult skate camp  
**Palm Springs 2024**  
SEPTEMBER 17 - SEPTEMBER 20  
Berger Foundation Iceplex

**ON AND OFF-ICE SESSIONS**

Daily off-ice warm up classes in studio

On-ice classes include:

- Randy's Three's Company
- Liz's Jumps, Spins, and Storytelling on Ice
- Jeremy's Movement with Music
- Elin's IceFlow

Small on-ice groups focusing on:

- Turns & Steps
- Jumps
- Choreographic Movement
- Spins

Private lessons available separately on request

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<https://www.theexperienceadultskatecamp.com>

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