



1111 ECHOES

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND REDS HERITAGE SOCIETY

SPRING 2020



ART LESIEUR

Art Lesieur Nominated for US Hockey Hall of Fame

With the induction of the Reds' Leland "Hago" Harrington into the US Hockey Hall of Fame in 2018, it became apparent that new consideration for induction was finally and deservedly being given by the organization to the pioneers of the game. **This year, his nomination is being placed and championed by the RI Hockey Hall of Fame.**

Art Lesieur is a Providence Reds and Rhode Island hockey legend. He played alongside Hago for eight years and ended his career with what many regard as even more worthy credentials for HOF consideration.

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Rhode Island's Resident Cartoonist Gets Start Through Reds Heritage Society

As a young lad "Frankie" (as he is known to us) amused himself by copying Frank Lanning's Sports cartoons from the Providence Journal. In doing so he was teaching himself to draw and emulate Lanning's style. His first poster was a collage of RI Reds greats drawn in 1999.

Frank was working for the Journal as a "Floater" in the News department. He was a "Jack of all trades" in the Newsroom. One day he was assigned to cover the re-opening of McCoy stadium after the building renovation in the late 90's. This assignment was to include the history of

the Pawsox complete with art work which was featured in the Pawsox Yearbook in 1999.

After the Providence Bruins won the Calder Cup in 1999, he wondered if there was still any interest in the Reds. If so, then he wanted to create a poster honoring them. This was a risky idea as the Reds hadn't played a game in 22 years. He contacted our own Tom McDonough (Hey, this IS RI) to pose the question and received a resounding "Yes". Frankie Galasso spent close to a year using outdated equipment to create his first RI Reds Poster. Mr. Galasso coordinated an "Unveiling" of the Poster at the site of the old Auditorium at



1111 Main Street in Providence. Attending dignitaries included Mayor Vincent Cianci, Louis A. Pieri, George Sage and Buster Clegg, among others.

That day, 12/20/1999, was the first reunion of many former players and management of the Reds, including Zellio Toppazzini, Chuck Scherza, Fernie Flaman, George Sage, Buster Clegg and the Pieri family. That day was also

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Rhode Island's Resident Cartoonist Gets Start through Reds Heritage Society

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important to Frankie as he was now selling posters and was promoted to Sports Cartoonist for the Journal.

The success of the unveiling may have been influential in giving the RI Reds Heritage Society the confidence to start having Reds Reunions and to grow into what we now know as our Society. In fact, Frankie was a founding father of our Society.

In 2000 he decided to create a poster of our beloved "Rocky Point". His works include several versions of the Reds, the Pawsox, the Bosox, Patriots, the Providence Bruins, RI icons such as lighthouses, and, of course, our very own cookbook cover "Something to Crow About".

Frankie is one of very few nationally syndicated sports cartoonists in the country. He was awarded the "New England Press Award" for the cartoon he created of a Rooster crying after the passing of Zelio Toppazzini.

Frank Galasso is still looking for opportunities to keep the art form alive and can be reached at 401-206-1385 or Frankgalasso@aol.com.

RI Hockey HOF to Unveil "Class of 2020" & "Wall of Fame"

The "Class of 2020" of the RI Hockey Hall of Fame will be unveiled on Saturday, Feb 22nd, between periods of the Providence Bruins - Springfield Thunderbirds game at the Dunkin' Donuts Center.

At the very same time, the HOF's new "Wall of Fame" kiosk will be unveiled alongside the Reds' kiosks on the north concourse of the Dunk.

The state-of-the-art touchscreen kiosk will feature video tributes to all of the Hall's inductees, as well as the recipients of the prestigious Chace Memorial Trophy for "lifetime achievement and contribution to the game of hockey."

Special \$18 ticket packages are available for the game. They include premium lower level seating and a FREE Providence Bruins hat. Proceeds of each ticket will be donated towards the new Hall of Fame Museum project.

Purchase tickets at (401) 680-4717 or click www.providencebruins.com/rihockey

A Golfing "Hat Trick"

The CVS Health Celebrity Charity Classic was held on Sunday, June 23, 2019, at Rhode Island's Barrington Country Club. The weather was spectacular, the place was filled with fans and you could feel the excitement.

Three celebrity golfers in the afternoon session were Derek Sanderson, Sean Kuraly and Rick Middleton. Andre Mayer and I volunteered for the event. No doubt Sean has a golf career waiting for him when he retires from hockey. His drive was over 300 yards. And Derek is the most pleasant, down to earth gentleman. Let's give these generous men a big Shout Out for participating in the event, which raised \$1,000,000 for New England Non-Profits.

Reba Golden

Articles Needed

I am appealing to players and fans to forward to me any hockey stories you may have from Reds games or about Reds players. We have been writing Newsletters for a long time and need input from insiders. When you send an article, please send it via email to rireds15@gmail.com. We will review it and if appropriate, print it in our Newsletter. When sending an article, please include a telephone number so we can discuss the article. There

are a lot of stories being told to small groups of players and fans but many are never told to our entire membership.

As an example, my dad, Gil, told me a story about a coach or trainer who got so excited as the team was entering the third period of a Calder Cup final game that he dropped his false teeth in the toilet and without a bat of an eye picked them up and popped 'em back in his mouth.

Let's make our 20th season our most "storied".

Andre Mayer

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Art Lesieur Nominated for US Hockey Hall of Fame

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With his skillful, unerring blueline play and his rights owned by the Montreal Canadiens, fans and opposing players, alike, assumed Art was Canadian. To the contrary, he was born in nearby Fall River, MA on September 13, 1907.

He began playing at age 13, tending goal because he couldn't skate. When his skating improved, he was moved to defense. After graduation, he took a job at a Providence paper company and was discovered sweeping RI Auditorium ice and playing center in the local Inter-City League by Jimmy Gardner and Jean Debuc, the coach and GM of the Reds, then the farm club of the Montreal Canadiens.

Art was invited to work out with the Reds and was given a job at the Auditorium while he progressed as a player. In 1927, the team found a spot for Art with the Nashua Nationals of the NE Hockey League. His play earned him a suit up with the Reds for a single game. His outstanding play that day against top talent validated Lesieur's promise as a player and prompted the Canadiens to purchase him from the team and sign him to a contract.

Art opened the 1928-29 campaign with Montreal before being loaned to the Chicago Blackhawks and then being assigned back to Providence.

Over the next 11 years,

he would bounce back and forth between Montreal and Providence. Along the way, Lesieur would compile a remarkable resume.



Over his career with the Reds, Art skated, captained, coached and played key roles on more championship teams than anyone in Reds' history, contributing to titles as a player in 1930, 1932, 1934, 1938 & 1940 and earning multiple All-Star nods along the way. In 1931, Art's defensive play helped the Canadiens capture their fourth Stanley Cup. In 1963, he was inducted as a charter member of the Reds' Hall of Fame.

Amazingly, during his playing days, he supplemented his income and his love of the game coaching both Brown University and Woonsocket, RI's storied Mount St Charles Academy

hockey teams, the latter to 5 RI state and 2 national titles. During the 1938-39 season, he negotiated a hat trick of duties playing for the Reds and coaching both Brown and MSC. He would later say, "There is a wallop in working with the young fellows and seeing them come along. That's my line."

In 1941, just days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Art enlisted in the Army. He served nearly five years, mostly commanding artillery batteries in both the European and North African theaters. Art returned to the game as head coach and scout for the Minneapolis Millers of the USHL and then as head coach of the Reds for the 1946-47 season.

Following his playing and coaching career, the longtime Warwick, RI resident returned to RI Auditorium ice refereeing high school and college games, as well as serving many years as an linesman for Reds' AHL home games.

Few in the stands or even playing in the games were aware that the burly man gracefully racing from end to end, blowing his whistle and breaking up tussles was, perhaps, the most accomplished and decorated skater on the ice.

Art passed away in 1967 at the age of 60. He and his wife, Maxine (Faubert), are laid to rest at St. Ann Cemetery in Cranston, RI.

Ross Brooks: Behind the Mask

Back in the day when Canadian towns would flood schoolyards and maintain ice rinks in and around Toronto, Ross learned to skate. There were usually two rinks built on the field and the "Learn to Skate" crowd would circle them on the periphery.

Once he got the hang of skating, he picked up a goalie stick and never looked back. To keep his eye-hand coordination sharp he played catcher in the summer for a fast pitch team. Like most Canadian kids he played lots of street hockey.

One day as a kid playing on a sub-par team and losing 16 to 0, he was approached to play by the coach of much better team and Ross took the opportunity to improve his game. That coach must have seen something in him, seeking out a goalie while losing by 16 goals.

How do you cope with having 16 goals scored against you? His response "We were kids, ten minutes later, you forget about it and move on to something else". Great attitude, eh?

His most treasured childhood memory was playing a 6 am game at Maple Leaf Garden while only seven years old. He was so excited about this that he didn't sleep for two days before. The history that that building

possessed was both thrilling and humbling to Ross. I think he wanted more of it.

He is also proud of winning the local High School football championship where he was quarterback.

On a local note, Ross played for Chuck Scherza's North Bay Trappers in the Senior A Hockey League.

Ross told me a story about a trainer who was very uptight. Ross needed new laces for his equipment. They had to be a certain length. The trainer begrudgingly found what Ross had looked for. As the trainer watched Ross with his new laces, Ross took out a pair of scissors and cut them in two. The trainer went berserk.

I asked why goalies are considered to be a bit whacky. He said that it might be because goalies have a lot of time on their hands, you are the last chance of preventing a goal, you feel the pressure so you think about whacky things to keep loose.

Ross jokes about how many places he has played hockey for, "Name a town and I probably played there". That's perseverance.

Back to Toronto and playing at Maple Leaf Garden as a Bruin was more nerve-racking than

the first time. His parents and friends were in the stands and this was the NHL with the best players in the world. He states that there is a big difference from league to league especially as to how quickly players can release the puck on target. Of note, Ross was high in the running for Rookie of the Year by winning 14 games in a row. Funny though, during the 15th game he couldn't have stopped a beach ball. Oh well, that's sports.

After his hockey playing days were over, he spent seven years coaching the Lincoln High School boys' team. His two daughters, Colleen and Kelly, were cheerleaders at Lincoln. Brooksie also had the pleasure of coaching his son Christopher. Tragically, Chris passed away in 1990 at the age of 26. The family set up a scholarship in Chris's name which still exists today.

Mr. Brooks is known by Red fans as the second Ray Ross award winner for perseverance. Ross credits another former Red, Milt Schmidt, for giving him a chance in the Big Leagues. While thanking Milt for that, Milt told him "You earned it". We agree and love his prolonged success story. Ross and all his fans say "Thank you Milt for a great ride".

Special Note

If you are receiving this Newsletter in print form, you NEED to send an email to Mal Goldenberg at mal@rmcri.com in order to receive the next Newsletter. Mal is collecting emails so we can send information to you instantly. The emails will be sent out as

blind copy to protect your identity.

The Newsletter is the most expensive and labor-intensive part of our operation other than the reunion. With the miracle of email, we can produce the Newsletter and keep you informed

and up to date at no charge at all. But we do need your e-mail address.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Andre Mayer

Remembering "Camille the Eel"

by Vin Cimini

It has been said that few players in NHL history did more with less physical ability than Camille Henry. Perhaps that's why memories of him while he played with the Reds stand out so vividly.

He notched 24 goals as a rookie with the NY Rangers in 1953-54, good enough to win the Calder Trophy as the NHL's Rookie-of-the-Year. He would go on to break the 20-goal mark eight times as a Ranger back in the days when 20 goals actually meant something.

There's an old gag line in appraising a player: "He's small but he's slow." That was Henry as a 20-year-old in 1953. He might have weighed 140 pounds, but unlike other small, swift players, he had little skating speed. What Henry did have was the knack of knowing where the puck would be and how to get there at the right time. He could stickhandle and shoot with anyone in the NHL, and developed into one of the greatest tip-in artists of all time.

"I know the big guys are going to push me around," he once said. "I'm a little guy and little guys always get pushed. But I've got something that the big guys don't have. I've got elusiveness. They don't hurt me that much because they don't get much of me."

The elusiveness earned Henry his nickname: "Camille The Eel." He needed it. Despite his size,

most of his goals came from in front of the net, where he was a master of converting rebounds and redirecting shots past goal-tenders.

Henry was a power-play specialist as a rookie, scoring 20 of his 24 goals with the man advantage. But after his breakout rookie season, Camille battled through a couple of broken arms and a return to the minors.

Fortunately for us, in 1955, the Rangers became the Reds' first NHL affiliate in 10 seasons and brought us the likes of Johnny Bower, Jim Bartlett, Bruce Cline, Also Guidolin, Marcel Paille, and, of course, Camille.

The 1955-56 season would not only become the greatest in Reds history, but was voted the best in all of minor league hockey history. They tore up the AHL, winning the league championship.

Bower was league MVP, Topper won the scoring title, Cline was named top rookie. All three joined Camille and team captain Andy Branigan on the All-Star Team.

On February 26th of that season, Camille tied an AHL record by scoring 6 goals in a game at home against the archrival Springfield Indians. Playing alongside Zellio Toppazzini and Paul Larivee, perhaps the greatest line in Reds, if not AHL, history, he would go on to score 44 more times that season, mak-



ing him only the second player in Reds history to reach the 50-goal plateau. It also heralded, Camille's return to the bigs.

By 1957-58, the Rangers, door-mats for most of the previous 16 years, were in second place and Henry was their leading goal-scorer, connecting 32 times while earning the Lady Byng Trophy. He kept on scoring, notching a career-best 37 goals in 1962-63 and adding 29 more in 1963-64.

Henry appeared in a couple of All-Star games and even became captain in 1964 when Andy Bathgate was traded. Henry lasted in the NHL until 1970. He finished his Rangers career with 256 goals, still sixth on the team's all-time list. --