



## Clegg to Receive Hall of Fame's Highest Honor

By Vin Cimini  
Board of Directors

The RI Hockey Hall of Fame has announced that the RI Reds Heritage Society founder, Sylvester "Buster" Clegg, has been selected the recipient of the 2020 Malcolm Greene Chace Memorial Trophy recognizing "Achievement and Outstanding Service by a Rhode Islander to the Game of Hockey."

The award is named after the Central Falls, RI, native widely considered the "father" of the game in the United States.

The award was scheduled to be presented during the Hall of Fame's annual Enshrinement Celebration & Dinner on Friday, August 28th at the Twin River Event Center in Lincoln, RI. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing restrictions,



*Buster Clegg, founder of the RI Reds Heritage Society, will receive the Malcolm Greene Chace Memorial Trophy.*

that event has been postponed until August 27th next year.

The 2020 class of seven RI hockey greats – Jack Ferreira, Jim Fullerton, David Capuano, Lou Cimini, Paul Guay, Garth Snow and Tim Army,

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## Pandemic Postpones Annual Reunion

### Event Rescheduled for Next Summer

By Vin Cimini  
Board of Directors

After 20 years, grand plans were put in place to shake up our annual get-together with exciting new locations, more fun things to do, and more creature comforts. However, the social distancing restrictions and health concerns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately resulted in the postponement of our weekend.

For starters, our 20th Reunion was scheduled to be held this year in the air-conditioned comfort of the grand Twin River Casino & Event Center, conveniently located just off Rt. 146 in Lincoln, RI. The new location offers a number of diversions, including slots, table games and free live entertainment. Adult beverages would have also been available at the Reunion event for the first time in quite a while.

To accommodate the new venue, we moved our

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# Clegg to Receive Chace Award

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grandson of Reds' legend, George Army - will be formally inducted that evening.

Raised in rural Burrillville, R.I., Buster was an All-State defenseman in high school before attending UNH where he played hockey for four years. The stalwart defenseman and co-captain was named team co-MVP as a senior in 1959.

After graduation, Buster impressed RI Reds owner Lou Pieri with his hockey resume, acumen and enthusiasm. He was hired as publicity director for both the AHL team and the RI Auditorium before being named the team's general manager in 1966. At that time, he was one of the youngest GMs in pro hockey. Most importantly, he was one of the very first hockey executives to focus on U.S. collegiate hockey



*Buster Clegg in his playing days.*

as a source of professional talent.

For close to four decades, Buster was also active as a youth hockey coach. He was a founder of the Barrington Youth Hockey Association in the early 70's during which time he occasionally served as a between-periods analyst for televised Boston Bruins

games.

In 1999, Buster became the founder and president of our RI Reds Heritage Society and the catalyst for the tremendous growth of our organization. One of the first of its kind and a model for others nationally, his vision has kept the memories of the Reds' storied 51-seasons alive for former players and fans, alike. Along the way, he has brought the Reds hockey family together each Summer for the past 20 years while championing the Society's development of skills, sportsmanship and safety programs focused on young players and the fans of the game.

Few, if any, have done so much for the sport of hockey in Rhode Island history and for that he is being deservedly honored. Please plan to join us in our tribute to Buster at our annual reunion next summer.

# Pandemic Postpones Annual Reunion

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Reunion headquarters to the brand new Hampton Inn & Suites Lincoln location just a few minutes away. The new hotel boasts modern rooms, more amenities and the convenience of a regular motor-coach shuttle to and from the Casino & Event Center. Our annual "Meet & Greet" would be held there on Thursday evening.

Replacing our annual awards dinner on the night prior to the Reunion will be an invitation to gather at the Casino Event

Center with the many local and national hockey notables who will be attending the RI Hockey Hall of Fame's Annual Enshrinement Celebration & Dinner. It's Rhode Island's hockey event of the year.

The highlight of that event will also be your opportunity to pay tribute to our own Buster Clegg, the man whose vision and tireless efforts raising funds and executing plans has made these Reunions a reality for you all of these years.

Now retired as president of the Society, Buster will be honored with the Hall of Fame's major

award, the Malcolm Greene Chace Memorial Trophy for "Lifetime Achievement and Contribution by a Rhode Islander to the Game of Hockey." Malcolm Greene Chace, born and raised in Central Falls, RI, is regarded as the "Father" of ice hockey in the United States.

With this pandemic behind us next year, please mark your calendar now to be with us NEXT SUMMER, AUG. 26-28, to reacquaint, reminisce with old friends, and pay tribute to Buster with your presence. We promise a rollicking good time.

# AN UNIMPRESSIVE START

*The Reds Saga Began on Dec. 3 1926,  
when Hec Lepine Scored the Team's First Goal,  
and Springfield Answered with Seven.*

By Vin Cimini  
Board of Directors

The news of a new indoor skating rink for Providence and the first indoor rink in the state of Rhode Island first appeared in the Providence Journal-Bulletin in April of 1925. By June, the rumor of a professional hockey team was being floated with the excitement of the new facility.

Just 22 months later, on Dec 3, 1926, the Providence Reds (but known locally as the RI Reds from that day forward) took the ice at the brand-spanking new RI Auditorium against the Springfield Indians.

Indeed, one of professional hockey's oldest rivalries was about to begin.

On paper, it was the Reds, a club assembled with talent provided by the Montreal Canadiens that was projected to be the class of the new Canadian-American Hockey League.

But not that night and not that season.

Before approximately 2500 fans, among them a large contingent of dignitaries, the Indians took it to them, winning 7-1.

That historic Reds' first goal? It came 53 minutes into the contest.

It was scored by center iceman Joseph Hector "Hec" Lepine, a year earlier the understudy to the legendary Howie Morenz back in Montreal.

Described as a player "rivals will take few liberties with," Lepine was "big, scrappy and played all over the ice."

They Reds finished their inaugural season with a 12-17-3 record, fourth in the five-team league.

Lepine finished the season with six goals and one



*Hec Lepine was "all over the ice."*

assist in 28 games.

The fire had been lit.

By the first game's end, coach Jimmy Gardner's charges began to flash the talent and chemistry fans would soon come to know as they would skate to three league titles over the next seven Can-Am seasons.



# When the Canadiens came to Rhode Island

By Andre Mayer  
Heritage Society President

As I entered the home of Gerry and Jeannine LaPierre in North Smithfield, Mr. LaPierre greeted me in his French-Canadian accent with a “Bon jour, comment ca va.”

Born and bred in Woonsocket, R.I., you would have thought he just skated out of the Montreal Forum and walked home. The house was nicely decorated with Habitants memorabilia in a very classy manner. Gerry has been a Montreal hockey fan since he was a child. He brought up his son, Denis, the same way.

So, in 2018, Denis, decided to give his father a Father’s Day that he’d never forget. It started with a call to his friend, Joe Kozlik, who had a connection to the Canadiens’ alumni director. Denis took it from there, selecting four players from a list of 10 that included Larry Robinson, Jacques Lemaire, Serge Savard, Bob Gainey, Steve Shutt, and Ken Dryden.

The four he selected are familiar to you, as well: Guy Lafleur, Yvan Cournoyer, Guy Lapointe, and Rejean Houle.

Father’s Day was delayed at the LaPierre household in 2018 but it was worth the wait. On Saturday, July 28, Denis hired a white stretch limo to pick up the former players at T.F. Green airport and bring them to Gerry’s



*Denis and Gerry LaPierre.*

home in North Smithfield. Denis had the event catered and provided the beer.

What do four ex-Montreal Canadiens talk about when they get together, you ask? It was mostly about how the Habs beat the B’s in those days.

One story was about game 7 in the of the 1976-77 Stanley Cup finals when the Bruins were short handed and Guy Lafleur scored on a drop pass from Lemaire with one-minute remaining in the

game.

They talked about Rejean Houle faking out the B’s defense and scoring in game 4 of the finals. Houle said that wherever he goes, people reminisce about that spectacular move and goal. Of course, the topic of current NHL salaries came up, too. LaFleur quipped, “A million-dollar salary back in my day was for the whole team.”

The focus of this belated Father’s Day was Gerry LaPierre: a hockey fan like most of us, having no formal hockey training but enjoying every minute on the ice, playing in men’s leagues for fun and exercise in the 70s.

I’d be remiss not to include his son, Denis, as a star of the day for his vision, his thoughtfulness, and the effort and resources to make this happen for his dad.

At the end of the day, on the legends’ departure from the airport, a massive hug given by Guy LaPointe to Gerry ended a day that the elder LaPierre will remember for the rest of his life.

Many local newspapers chronicled the Canadiens’ visit with photos of Gerry laughing and reminiscing with his hockey heroes. He became an instant celebrity around town and in the RI hockey community. To this day, people he’d never met stop him to ask about the event.

I guess that when you hang out with hockey royalty some of that celebrity status rubs off on you.

# Society Announces 2020 Unsung Heroes

By **Andre Mayer**  
Heritage Society President

The Rhode Island Reds Heritage Society has announced the names of five RI Interscholastic League hockey players as the 2020 recipients of its annual Unsung Hockey Hero Awards.

Unsung Heroes are high school hockey players who contribute to their teams in ways that perhaps only their coaches and fellow players are aware of. This year's recipients are Sara Lisi from LaSalle Academy, Rose Flaherty from Tollgate, Alexis Malnerich from Barrington High School, and Emma Byrnes and Sean Martin, both from Smithfield High School.

Often, these "Unsung Heroes" exemplify the term "student athlete" but there is usually more than that. Many are civic minded and go above and beyond to serve their community while maintaining their focus on academics and hockey. The stories are as varied as the athletes.

Awards are given to both male and female hockey players in memory of three former Rhode Island Reds stand out players. The Chuck Scherza Award is given to forwards. The Fernie Flaman Award is given to defensemen and the Gil Mayer Award to goaltenders or defensive players.

Sarah Lisi, a goaltender, was selected recipient of this year's

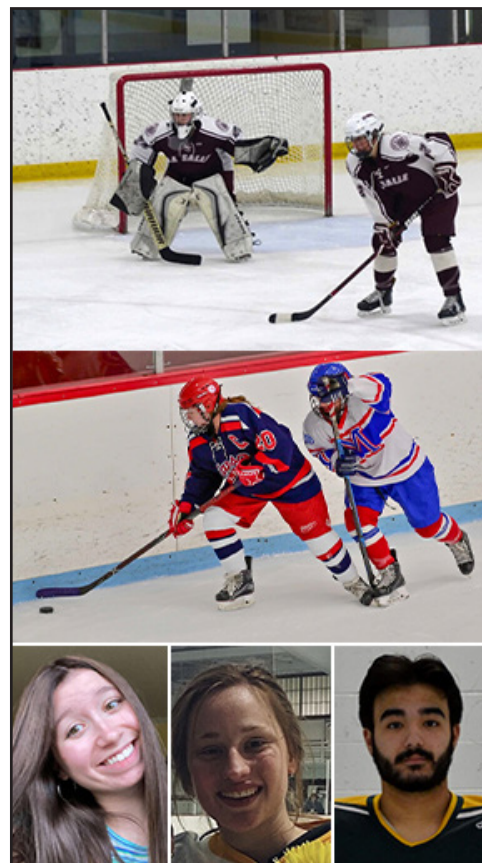
Gil Mayer award for women. She attended La Salle Academy, playing for coach Sean McNamara. It was Sarah's first year in the nets, effectively using her experience as a field hockey goalie to become a key player in LaSalle's state championship drive.

Rose Flaherty won this year's Fernie Flaman Award for women. Rose attended Tollgate High School where she earned Honor Roll/High Honors all 4 years. She was coached by David Tibbetts and played for the Warwick Co-op team.

There were three recipients of this year's Chuck Scherza Award for forwards - Alexis Malnerich from Barrington High School, and Emma Byrnes and Sean Martin, both from Smithfield High School.

Alexis Malnerich, who played for the East Bay Co-op ladies, played her first year of hockey this past season. Notably, with her father mostly working out of the country, she lived in five countries during the past ten years. But she made her imprint in Barrington, becoming the "can do" model for coach Michael Cox's team.

This was also Smithfield's Emma Byrnes' first year of varsity hockey, playing for coach Kerri Nadeau's Smithfield/Coventry/Moses Brown Co-op team. In addition for her standout ice play, she was also Vice President of the National Honor Society and a



*The 2020 Unsung Hero Award winners are, top, Sarah Lisi; middle, Rose Flaherty; bottom left, Emma Byrnes; bottom center, Alexis Malnerich; bottom right, Sean Martin.*

four-year member of the French Honor Society and Science Olympiad.

According to Robert Jackson, Sean Martin's "willingness to put others before himself and sacrifice everything for the betterment of the team," set the effort standard for his Smithfield six. Outside the rink, Sean also excelled in the classroom, attaining a remarkable 4.2 GPA on a 4.0 scale while playing two varsity sports.



# Showing Our Colors

**I**t was late March when I came across the obituary of Mario Martone in the Providence Journal. The obituary stated that he was a member of the "R.I. Reds Heritage Society" and was co-founder of Mario's Triangle Service.

I knew Mario because my dad, Gil Mayer, and most of the Reds playing at the time brought their cars to his mechanic shop.

I continued to take my car to Mario's where his son Louis took over after Mario retired.



As I got ready to go to the wake I asked my wife if wearing my RI Reds sweater would be appropriate as he was a member of our Society.

After a few seconds of pause, she said it might be OK to wear it. So, I did.

When I got to the funeral home I started

feeling a bit out of place among the mostly well-dressed co-mourners among the crowd. However, once I got to the casket that all changed. Lying there next to Mario was a neatly folded RI Reds "T" shirt proudly displayed.

After saying a prayer as I moved towards the reception line, I passed a R.I. Reds jersey (White and Red) with the number 17 on it.

As I spoke to Louis, I told him about my apprehension about my attire. He said, "Don't worry about it, Mario is smiling down on you right now."

It was amazing to see how special our beloved Reds still are here in Rhode Island.

As for me, I'll continue to wear my colors proudly. Rest in peace Mario.

## RED ROOSTER'S UPDATE

**Andy Mayer**

**Heritage Society President**



## We Need Email Addresses

**N**ext to our annual reunion, production and postage for our newsletters are by far our biggest expense. But it costs us \$0 to send them to you digitally (via email) and keep dues reasonable. So please send us your email address! If you don't have a computer, ask a family member or friend for theirs. We can send it to them, and they can get it for you. Please provide ASAP to Mal Goldenberg at mal@rmcri.com or call him at 1-401-864-6191.

## Our Sincerest Sympathies

**T**he RI Reds Heritage Society mourns the passing of Patricia Anne Menard, Howie Menard's loving and adored wife of 60 years. Our condolences to Howie, one of our favorite and always-smiling, always-laughing Reds' alumni and his daughters, Maureen, Michelle, Margo and grandchildren. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, good friend.



Donations in her name may be sent to:

Feed the Need in Durham  
371 Marwood Dr., Unit A  
Oshawa, ON L1H 7P8



1111 ECHOES is published by the  
Rhode Island Reds Heritage Society

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