



## What a Great Finale! Society Hosts 21st and Last Reunion

By Andre Mayer  
Heritage Society President

If you were fortunate enough to be among the nearly 150 attendees at our Grand Finale Reunion, you experienced a real treat. So many wonderful hockey players, fans, and families all shared fond memories of good times gone by.

The cheerful afternoon started in the main lobby where we all enjoyed our favorite beverages, mingled with old friends and acquaintances, and met new ones. It wasn't long before we entered the dining room, adorned with stand-up banners of RI's greatest hockey legends, including many former Reds.

The banners were displayed for us compliments of the RI Hockey Hall of Fame, which held their annual and very successful enshrinement celebration the evening prior. The stage was decorated with illuminated letters spelling out "RI REDS" in 4-foot-high blocks. Adding to the ambiance was a vintage goal net with a life-size cut out of my dad, Gil, tending goal. Spectacular!

The Chicken Parm and Baked Scrod meals were fantastic, which is par for the course at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet. Reds mementoes and Heritage Society apparel were flying off the merchandise table.

This year's award recipients all made appreciative and heartfelt speeches. They included Ray Morgan and Gerry Letourneau, who both received the Sage Family Service Award; Joe Exter, recipient of the Ray Ross Perseverance Award; Brian



*Joe Rocco interviews Ross Brooks, Bobby Leduc and Stan Baluik about their time with the Rhode Island Reds.*

Boucher, this year's Native Son Award recipient; and the late Tommy Woodcock, who received the Society's annual Tops Award, which was accepted by his good friend and fellow HOF trainer, Pete Demers.

A special shout out is in order here for Bill Connell for the wonderful job he did as MC of the event.

The "Main Event" included Joe Rocco interviewing Ross Brooks, Bobby Leduc and Stan Baluik. Too much information in that segment to describe here, so I again refer you back

to our website where it is presented in its entirety.

I am so proud of what our Board of Directors has done to make our last in-person Reunion a Calder Cup Championship success. And while it's sad, you'll be happy to know that a more modern and interactive website is on the way and, along with our regular newsletters and historical Reds features, will further fuel our mission to keep our wonderful memories vividly alive for you and generations to come.

### ★ Event Highlights

Photos from the Heritage Society's final Reunion. *Pages 7-8*

### ★ Video

The video of all of acceptance speeches and other highlights of the event are posted on our Society website at:

[http://rireds.org/2010Website/About\\_OurStory.htm](http://rireds.org/2010Website/About_OurStory.htm).

# Farewell to a Friend

By Bob Spaziano  
Heritage Society Board of Directors

This past summer, just before our last Reds Reunion, Tom McDonough passed away and we lost someone very special to all of us. Anyone who attended our annual Reunions knew Tom, the emcee of each and every one of our prior get-togethers. This soothing "Voice of our Reunions" had a unique ability to hold our attention and skillfully summarize a player's career and accomplishments in his introductions.

Tom graduated from St. Raphael's Academy, where he played baseball and hockey. After graduating from Providence College and a serving a stint in the Army, Tom was employed by the RI Department of Human Services. He retired after 33 years as an Associate Director.

Tom was also a true sportsman and sports fan. He was the founding director of the Cranston Sports Collector's Show. He personally ran it for 40 years. The show became the largest in New England, with the proceeds donated to Immaculate Conception Church for youth activities.

Tom was also a scout for the Seattle Mariners, broadcast Woonsocket High School football games, and hosted a local sports talk show on the radio.

Tom's true passion was the RI Reds. Tom was the stick boy for the 1955-56 Calder Cup Championship team. The relationships he developed with the players and team officials resulted in a true affection for the Reds that increased steadily through the years. When Buster Clegg formed the Heritage Society in 2001, Tom was a founding director. Tom was an important participant in the planning and success of all of our Reunions. His spirit and dedication will always be with us.

Tom is survived by his wife Pat, his sons Tom and Chris, and his 4 cherished grandchildren.



## Hear Tom Talk Hockey

In the early 1980s, Tom McDonough was asked by WEAN's Chuck Wilson to fill in on his sports talk show.

Tom planned a show on a subject he knew best – the Reds. And what a guest list of former stars he lined up for his 2-hour

show – Zellio Toppazzini, Chuck Scherza, Harvey Bennett, Paul Larivee, Ray Powell, Ed Giacomini and more.

That show is now presented in 12 segments on the Society's website – RIREDS.org – in the History section.



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# Remembering Randy Rota

By Wayne Forrest  
Writer for The Heritage Society

Randy “The Rocket” Rota spent only one season with our RI Reds, but the diminutive native of Creston, B.C. remains long remembered for his speed and blistering slap shot.

Rota came to Providence for the 1970-71 season, one month after his 20th birthday, as the Oakland Seals’ third round and 33rd overall selection in the NHL draft. Unlike today, the draft was not broadcast on TV. “We sat at home, waited for our names to be picked, and then get a phone call,” Randy recalled. “I was working for my dad’s construction company at the time. On our lunch hour, I got a call from my mom who said I was drafted by the Seals.”

Rota signed a two-way contract with Oakland and pocketed a \$2,000 signing bonus.

Like many young men with a sudden money windfall, he bought his first brand new car – a 1969 Ford Mustang.

“The Rocket,” so dubbed by Reds’ radio play-by-play broadcaster George Patrick Duffy, skated on a line with veteran center Joe Szura and 25-year-old right winger Alton White. “Joe was the pivot guy. He would set up either Alton or myself,” Randy said. “Alton was a very fast skater and I had some speed, too. My big thing was my speed and my shot. We complemented each other well, worked very hard, and it kept snowballing.”

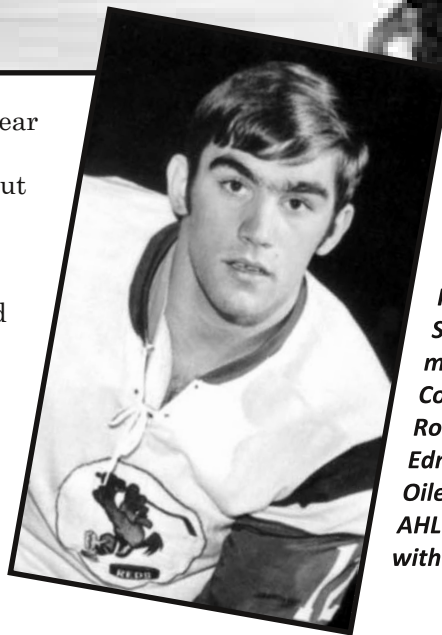
By season’s end, the 5-foot-7 Rota tallied 31 of the line’s 81 goals and 34 of the trio’s 119 assists. The Reds went to the Calder Cup finals that season, but were swept in four games by the Springfield Kings.

Unfortunately, Randy followed the Seals out of town when Oakland changed its AHL affiliation to Baltimore for the 1971-72 season. Before he could don a Clippers jersey, Rota was traded to Montreal and topped the Nova Scotia Voyageurs with 32 goals on the way to the Calder Cup



championship. The following year he scored 34 goals as the Voyageurs went to another – but this time unsuccessful – finals appearance. Randy made his debut with the Canadiens on November 14, 1972, and scored his first NHL goal that same night against the New York Islanders and goalie Billy Smith.

Before his retirement in 1979, he would suit up for four more NHL teams – the LA Kings, Kansas City Scouts, Colorado Rockies and Edmonton Oilers.



*Randy Rota spent the 1974-75 and 1975-76 with the Kansas City Scouts before moving to the Colorado Rockies and Edmonton Oilers. His first AHL season was with the Reds.*

# GLEEFUL REAPER

by Lanning



## Cartoon Memories: Jimmy Bartlett

Jimmy Bartlett was an all-time favorite with our Reds and was a significant figure on the team's historic 1955-56 Calder Cup run.

Fast, fearless and a prolific scorer, Jim's motor never stopped. Little known is that Jim played for

the Boston Olympics and, in 1952, he filled in for a game between the pipes when the regular goalie suffered a leg injury and could not continue.

Jim's first taste of the NHL came in 1955 when he was called up by

the Montreal Canadiens to be Rocket Richard's replacement in the Stanley Cup finals against the Detroit Red Wings.

He was inducted into the AHL Hall of Fame as a Providence Red in 2018.

# HUBERT C. MILOT

## His Dream Came True for All of Us

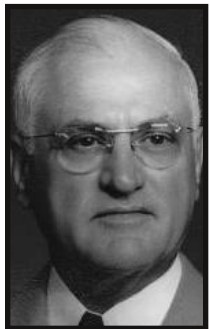
By Wayne Forrest  
Writer for The Heritage Society

The story of the birth of the RI Auditorium and that of the Providence (RI) Reds began nearly 100 years ago with local businessman and hockey enthusiast Hubert C. Milot.

Born in New Bedford, Hubert's family moved to Providence, where he was educated at LaSalle Academy. He attended University at St. Mary's College in Montreal. At St. Mary's he befriended classmate Leo Dandurand, a hockey-playing American, who would later come to own and manage the Montreal Canadiens.



Hubert Milot



Leo Dandurand

Milot had become enthralled with hockey. In the 1920s and now an Olneyville textile mill owner, Hubert marveled at the escalating popularity of professional hockey and saw the National Hockey League's burgeoning desire to expand beyond its Canadian borders into the northeast United States as an opportunity for Rhode Island. Milot was so convinced of Providence's potential that he explored the feasibility of establishing an NHL franchise for the capital city in the spring of 1924, the second U.S. city after New York to do so.

In his book *The NHL, A Centennial History: 100 Years of On-Ice Action & Boardroom Battles*, author D'Arcy Jenish describes how the 36-year-old Milot traveled to "Montreal to sound out the possibilities of acquiring a franchise, though the city did not have a rink of any kind." He attributed the following quote to Milot: "There are tremendous possibilities there. Providence is the

centre of a thickly populated district of fine sporting proclivities and hockey is now extremely popular. Thousands are out skating at every opportunity."

Upon his return to Providence, Hubert sets his sights on creating a showcase for sports and entertainment that would surpass any other venue in New England. He then chose an ideal site centrally located in one of the state's more populated areas. The piece of land at 1111 North Main Street sat between Second and Third Streets and, if everything fell into place, would host professional, amateur, scholastic, and collegiate athletics, as well as ice and roller skating, boxing, and a variety of community and family-oriented events.



*The RI Auditorium, a sports showcase unlike any other.*

In April 1925, Milot unveiled detailed plans for a \$500,000, 8,000-seat arena, which quickly gained the avid support of influential RI businessmen and civic leaders. Ten months later, on February 27, 1926, the RI Auditorium held its official grand opening. With a capacity of 6,000 seats, it was smaller than originally proposed but larger than the Bruins' Boston Arena as Milot had promised. Bold, white, upper case letters declared "ARENA" above the Auditorium's entrance to highlight the red brick façade and provide a roost for the iconic Raging Rooster painted just below the roof's peak.

With Milot serving as the Auditorium's general manager, ice skating exhibitions and amateur and collegiate hockey were regular attractions. To help foster local interest in pro hockey and the coming RI Reds' minor league franchise with players supplied by Dandurand's Montreal farmhands, Milot and his team arranged for a three-game round robin series between the Canadiens, Boston Bruins, and New York Americans in late March after their regular NHL seasons ended. The Reds made their debut in the Canadian-American Hockey League on December 2, 1926, losing to the Springfield Indians, 7-1, in front of some 2,500 fans, less than half the Auditorium's capacity.

In 1946, Milot received a silver-engraved lifetime pass to the Auditorium to commemorate his enormous contributions to professional and amateur hockey in Rhode Island and for being the catalyst for the arena's construction. "We used to have trouble giving tickets away," he recalled as the Auditorium turned 20 years old. "We'd flood downtown Providence with 2,000 passes, but only 200 or 300 would accept. That's how difficult it was at the start to interest folks in pro hockey, but the game gradually took hold and look at the peak it's attained now. You're lucky these days if you're able to purchase a ticket in advance."

# Did You Know?

## A Rookie and a Hero

### Did You Know...

Dudley "Red" Garrett was a rookie with the RI Reds and the New York Rangers in the 1942-43 season, skated in 6 games with the Reds and 23 on Broadway.

Then, like many young men that season, Red Garrett answered the call to duty and entered the Navy. On November 24, 1944, Dudley Garrett was killed while serving his country in World War II. In 1947, the AHL created the Dudley 'Red' Garrett Memorial Award, which annually honors the AHL's Rookie of the Year.

Over the years, six former Reds have won the award: Bruce Cline (1956), Bill Sweeney (1958), Stan Baluik (1960), Rick Middleton (1974), Gerry Holland (1975), and Greg Holst (1976).



## Johnny Gagnon

**Did You Know...** In his rookie pro campaign with the Quebec Beavers in 1926, Johnny Gagnon led the Canadian-American Hockey League in scoring in what was the league's inaugural season.

The Beavers, known as the "Castors" in French-speaking Canada, were partly owned by Hubert C. Milot, the Providence textile industrialist who conceived, built and owned the RI Auditorium.

The lightning quick "Black Cat," who left home at age 16 to pursue a professional career in hockey, then spent three seasons with the Reds before cracking the line-up of the defending Stanley Cup Champion Montreal Canadiens to start the 1930-31 season.



## Hockey Ran in the Goegan Family

**Did You Know...** Tony Goegan was the youngest of 3 brothers who played professional hockey.

Tony, the very popular Reds defender turned forward, played 6 of his 8 AHL seasons with the Reds.

Brother, Pete, played 10 seasons in the NHL, while oldest brother, Fiori, played 21 pro seasons.

Fiori's son, Grant, a former BU Terrier standout, played 10 years in Italy, six with the Italian National Team, including in the 1984 Olympic Games in Sarajevo.



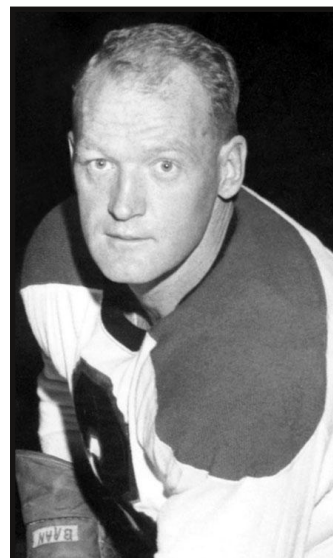
## The Reds Reached to Washington

**Did You Know...**The Washington Presidents were a fixture in the Eastern Hockey League from 1954 thru 1973.

They were owned by Lou Pieri over the 1958-59 season as a minor league team for the Reds.

The team wore Reds' hand-me-down sweaters and were coached by Andy Branigan, the captain of the Reds historic 1955-56 Calder Cup champs.

Among the players it groomed for or played with the Reds were Ed Giacomini, Harvey Bennett, Ken Davies, Bob Blackburn, Hope High School's Tommy Woodcock, Burrillville High School's George "Butch" Keeling, and Gord Flaman, Fernie Flaman's brother.



## THE GRAND FINALE

# REUNION HIGHLIGHTS



*Heritage Society Treasurer Bill Connell was Master of Ceremonies.*



*Ray Morgan receives the Sage Family Service Award.*



*Family of Andy Branigan, Zellio Topppazzini and Lou Pieri enjoy cocktail hour before the Reunion Dinner and Presentation of Awards.*



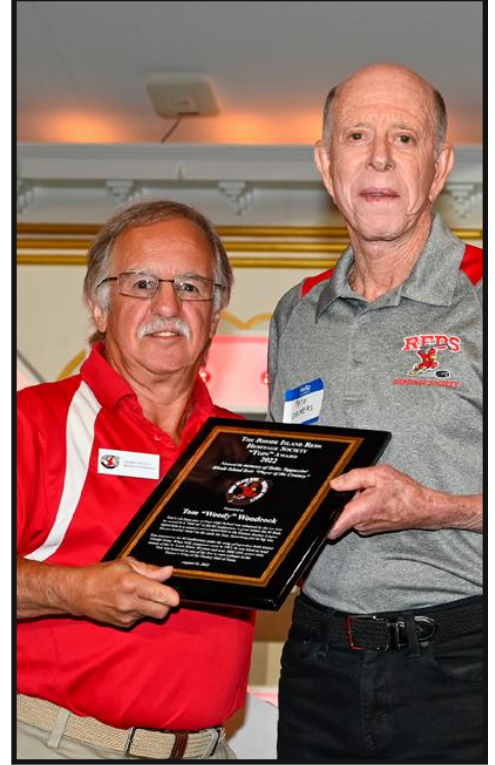
*Society President Andre Mayer presents the Sage Family Service Award to Gerry Letourneau.*

## THE GRAND FINALE

# REUNION HIGHLIGHTS



Enjoying the cocktail hour: Left to right, Bill and Steve Anderson, Howie Menard, Linda and Hartland Monahan, and Janice Clifford.



Hall of Fame Trainer Pete Demers, right, accepts the Tops Award for the late Tommy Woodcock.



Joe Exter accepts the Ray Ross Perseverance Award from Ray Ross, Glenn Ross, and Gary Ross.



Brian Boucher receives the Native Son Award.