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ECHOES

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND REDS HERITAGE SOCIETY

SPRING 2024

HOF HAT TRICK

Scherza to enter RI Hockey Hall of Fame

By Wayne Forrest
Heritage Society Board

Former RI Reds center Chuck Scherza will achieve a prestigious hat trick in August when he is enshrined in the Rhode Island Hockey Hall of Fame. As one of the most prolific scorers and beloved players to ever don a Reds sweater, Chuck already is a member of the Reds Hall of Fame (Class of 1968) and the Manitoba Hall of Fame (Class of 1993).

Chuck came to Providence at the age of 22 for the 1945-46 season after dividing the previous two seasons between the Boston Bruins, New York Rangers, and Hershey Bears. During his ten seasons here, he played in 649 games – the second-highest total in team history – and achieved an ironman streak of skating in 309 consecutive contests. After notching 15 goals and 42 points in his first season, Chuck followed up with his best performance in 1946-47 with 21 goals and 57 points. He closed out his Reds career with 139 goals and 297 assists, good for 436 points, the fourth-highest point total among all Reds. He also served as team captain for five seasons and set several American Hockey League marks including fastest two goals by one player (six seconds).

There was more to Chuck than offense. Never one to back away from a skirmish, he was considered one of



Continued on Page 2 Reds star Chuck Scherza will enter the RI Hockey Hall of Fame with the Class of 2024.

Scherza to enter RI Hockey Hall of Fame

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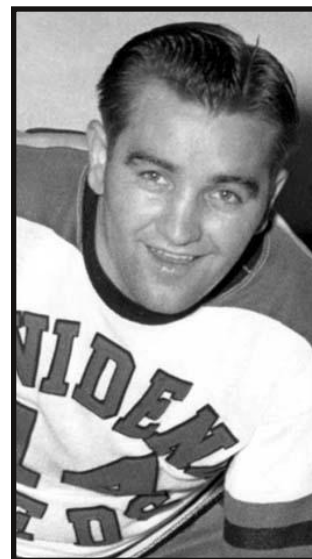
the toughest players and hardest hitters in the AHL. The hard-nosed bruiser registered 539 penalty minutes, the third-highest total in Reds' history.

After his time in Providence, Chuck skated with the Trois Rivieres (Quebec) Lions and North Bay (Ontario) Trappers.

Unfortunately, his playing days ended in 1959 during his third season as player/coach of the Trappers when an opponent's stick struck Chuck in the face, causing the loss of an eye. He eventually settled in Pawtucket and raised his family there. After retirement, Chuck began a longtime career as an on-ice linesman for Reds games and a respected referee in the RI Interscholastic Hockey League.

In honor of his accomplishments, the RI Reds Heritage Society retired Chuck's No. 14 at the organization's annual reunion in 2014, five months after his passing in March of that year.

Chuck will join four other inductees into the RIHHOF's Class of 2024: Joe Augustine, head coach of the University of Rhode Island's hockey team for the last 34 seasons; Tim Regan, three-time All-State goalie with LaSalle Academy, NCAA All-American, and two-time NCAA champion with Boston University; Bill Bennett, a seven-year pro with the Boston Bruins, Rochester Americans, and Hartford Whalers; and Vicki Movsessian-Lamoriello, a member of the 1998 U.S. Olympic women's hockey team and member of the Providence College and U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame.



Chuck Scherza

Our Society Needs Your Continued Support!

By Andre Mayer
Heritage Society President

Thanks to your generosity this past year, the work of our Heritage Society went into an even higher gear. Our **Research** has become deeper, our **Newsletters** more interesting and frequent, our **Kiosk** displays more exciting, and we'll soon be unveiling a new **Website** that we

promise will wow you. But that's not all..

To digitally **Preserve** the team's history, we professionally scanned hundreds of newspaper clippings and players and action photos dating back to the 1920's from album pages donated by fans and the collections of players, like Topper and Ross Brooks.

Also this year, together with the RI Hockey Hall of Fame, we established a scholarship program and televised **All-**

Star Hockey Games to showcase the talents of RI's best high school boys & girls for college coaches.

None of this would have been possible without you. Our Board kindly asks that you please continue your support with a modest donation of \$25 or more for the maximum memories and benefits we continue to provide you and our hockey community.

Thank you, sincerely.

Please Accept my 2024 Contribution to Support the Work & Mission of the RI Reds Heritage Society

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George Sage: Rhody's Favorite Adopted Son

George Sage was born in Rochester, NY in 1931. He graduated from Deerfield Academy and Babson College before arriving in Rhode Island, where he began a 43-year residence in Barrington and built the Bonanza Bus Company.

He purchased the RI Reds hockey team in 1969 and operated it until 1976. To give a home to the Reds, he helped spearhead the construction of the Providence Civic (now the Amica Mutual Pavilion) on the site of the old Sabin Street bus terminal.

George was also a dedicated philanthropist whose business success proved to be a "bonanza" for local schools and charities. He held his adopted state in such high esteem that he established a donor advised fund at the Rhode Island Foundation with his children, Anne Sage and George 'Jim' Sage Jr., as its advisers.

Both have remained generous benefactors to the work of our Heritage Society since the passing of their beloved father. Truly it may be said that George Sage's generous heart continues to beat for the benefit of the Reds legacy and all of his fellow Rhode Islanders.



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Did You Know?

Carl Liscombe and the Scoring Trophy

In 1949, Carl was vying to capture the award named after him, the Carl Liscombe Trophy, as the AHL's leading scorer. It was the AHL's practice at the time to present it to the leading point getter each year and name it after that winner. Liscombe had accomplished that the year before when it was called the Willy Kilrea Award. Unfortunately, he came up short and was not able to win his own award that year. In 1955, the award was permanently named the John B. Sollenberger Trophy.



Carl Liscombe

Jimmy Bartlett and the "B-Line"

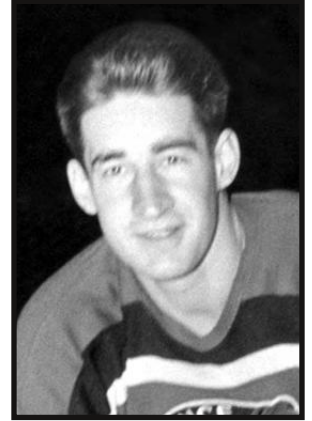
Jim was the straw that stirred up all the excitement (and sometimes chaos) on the Reds' famous "B Line" with Stan Baluik and Pierre Brilliant. Inducted into the AHL Hall of Fame in 2018, Jim tied an AHL record on Jan. 5, 1958, when he scored two goals in a span of just five seconds against Rochester and goaltender Gerry McNeil. The mark still stands six decades later.



Pierre Brilliant, Stan Baluik, and Jimmy Bartlett

Roger Bedard and the Slapshot

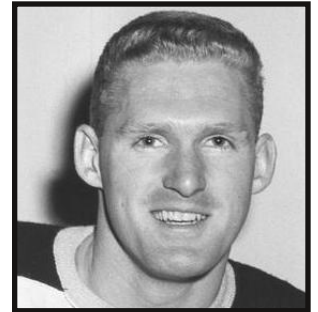
Roger, the former Mount St Charles (Woonsocket, RI) and boarding school star from Quebec, is claimed by many longtime fans as being the first RI Reds player whose primary shot was the slapshot. In 1906, it was Eddie Martin, playing in Nova Scotia's pioneering Colored Hockey League, who is credited to be the player who first scared goalies into wearing protective facemasks to survive his errant slapshots.



Roger Bedard

Larry Hillman: His CUPS Runneth Over

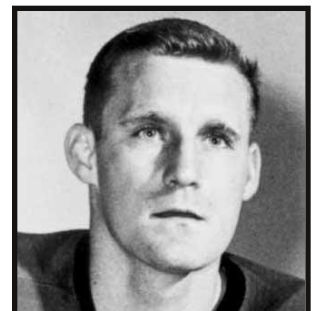
At age 18 and 2 months in 1955, as a member of the Detroit Red Wings, former Reds' defenseman Larry Hillman became the youngest player to ever play on a Stanley Cup championship team. Under current NHL rules, a player must turn 18 by September 15 to be eligible to play in the NHL that season so Hillman's record can never be broken. He was one of the most traveled players in hockey history, having played for 15 different teams in his 22 professional seasons. In the NHL he played for Detroit, Boston, Toronto, Montreal, Minnesota, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Buffalo, and in the WHA with Cleveland Crusaders and Winnipeg Jets. In his career he won the Stanley Cup 6 times (1955 Detroit; 1962/63/64/67 Toronto; 1969 Montreal) and he won the WHA's Avco Cup twice with the Winnipeg Jets. Larry was also a Calder Cup champion with the 1964-65 Rochester Americans. His brother, Floyd, played with the Reds from 1959 thru 1961, and brother, Wayne, won a Stanley Cup with the Blackhawks in 1961.



Larry Hillman



Floyd Hillman



Wayne Hillman

HANGING TOUGH

Battleship Kelly Keeps on Fighting

By Bill O'Connor
Heritage Society Board

Many Reds fans remember Bob Kelly, the popular forward who played 1½ seasons with the Reds during the 1970 and 1971 campaigns.

His nickname, “Battleship,” was coined by renowned Reds PR Director and radio announcer George Patrick Duffy. It was fitting and it stuck.

Bob is still talked about to this day by Reds fans.

Surprisingly, he played only 91 games with our Reds, totaling just three goals and five assists and only 59 minutes in penalties.

But his legend became bigger than life.

He later spent six seasons in the NHL, collecting 87 goals and 196 points with the Blues, Pens and Blackhawks.

A tough guy in the toughest hockey generation of them all, he stood his ground with the heavyweights of the game in the 1970s.

Now, 44 years after he hung up his skates, Bob has fought a different kind of battle.

“I’m trying to stay alive,” says Kelly. His battle has been with cancer.

At one point, Bob recalls being down to 128 pounds.

“I just couldn’t eat, couldn’t do anything,” he says. “They finally stuck a feeding tube into me.”

It took Bob nearly two years to raise his weight to 172 pounds.

Sometime back, Bob, whose full name is John Robert Kelly, started using the “J” in front of his name (he became J. Bob Kelly) to distinguish himself from Bob “Hound” Kelly, who played for the Flyers during the Broad



Battleship Kelly was inducted into the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame in 2017.



Street Bully days.

Battleship has fond memories of his playing days and a career he wasn’t planning for when the Toronto Maple Leafs drafted him 16th overall in 1967.

“Battleship”, who teamed with another ex-Red, Steve Durbano, in the bigs, was one of the game’s true enforcers during his time in the NHL – always having the back of his grateful teammates.

He took special pride in two encounters with Dave Schultz. He knocked Schultz on his rear twice; once with two punches and once with three. Bob also maintained that he also challenged the entire Philly bench one night.

But cancer is a different kind of fight. Keep fighting, friend. We have your back.

ROD PAAVOLA

The Reds' Gold Medal Olympian

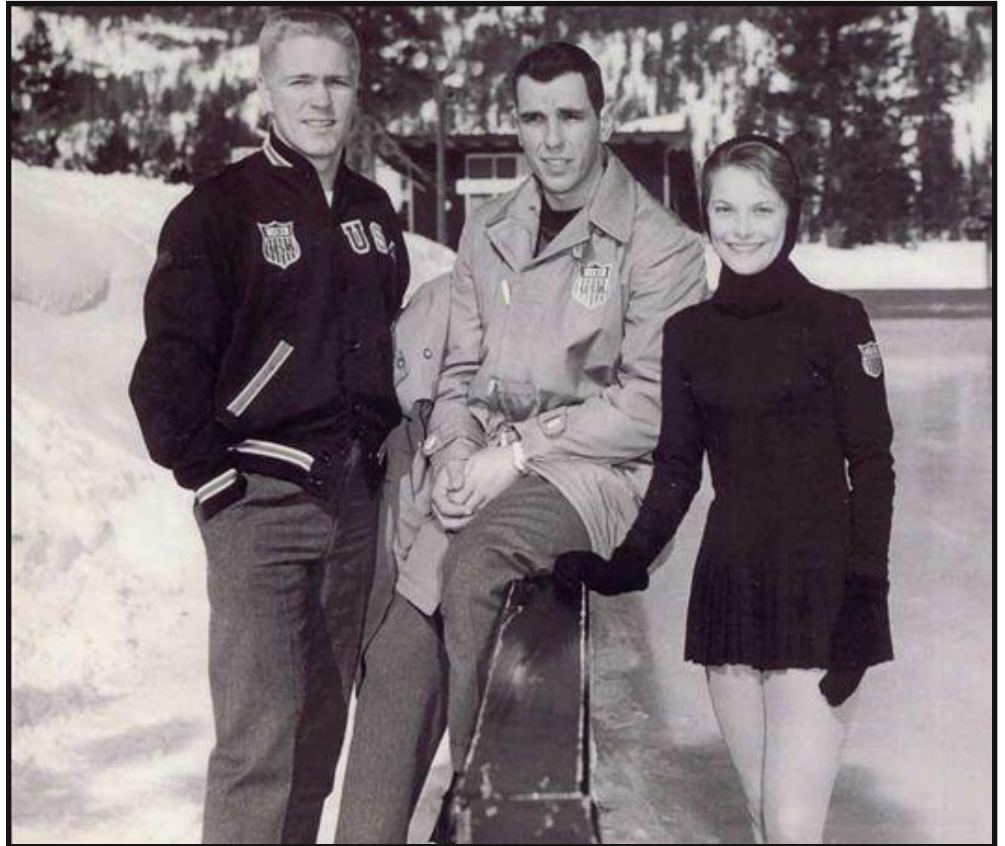
By Wayne Forrest
Heritage Society Board

The Rhode Island Reds had a piece of Olympic gold on the blueline with Rod Paavola on defense during the 1961-62 season. The Hancock, Michigan, native was a member of the 1960 U.S. Olympic hockey team that authored the first "Miracle on Ice" by unexpectedly winning the Gold Medal in Squaw Valley, CA.

At 5-foot-10 and 190 lbs., Rod was instrumental in defending the U.S. net throughout the Olympic tournament, after honing his skills the previous year with the U.S. National Team.

The Americans rolled over Australia and Czechoslovakia to advance to the medal round in the 1960 Olympics and followed up with decisive victories over Sweden and Germany. Their undefeated record brought them face-to-face with the Canadian Olympic team. Again, the U.S. stood strong and edged Canada, 2-1. By now, the world had certainly noticed these young overachievers. After falling behind the Soviet Union's hockey team early in the semifinal game, the U.S. stormed back to beat the Soviets and set up the Gold Medal contest against Czechoslovakia. The Americans trailed the Czechs, 4-3, early in the second period before reeling off a six-goal rampage to win Olympic gold.

Coming off his stint in the Olympics, Rod signed with the Milwaukee Falcons of the IHL for the 1960-61 season, where he learned the pro game over 64 games with the Falcons and the IHL's Muskegon Zephyrs when Milwaukee folded in December. His time in the IHL paid off. When Rod came to the Reds' training camp



U.S. Olympic hockey team members Rodney Paavola and Jack McCarten with U.S. figure skater Carole Heiss in 1960. All three won gold medals.

in October 1961, general manager Terry Reardon said the defenseman had "shown just too much" to let him go.

Rod also proved quite versatile when player/coach Fernie Flaman elevated him to the starting lineup on November 25 against Springfield. Rod skated as a defenseman and forward in the Reds 5-3 win while three defenseman – including Flaman – simultaneously served penalties in a raucous second period. Two months later, Flaman moved Rod up to forward to help tighten the Reds' defense.

Rod's time with the Reds, however, was brief. The team optioned him to Syracuse in the Eastern Hockey

League early in the 1962-63 season to get more seasoning, but Rod instead landed back in the IHL with Muskegon. His first full season there was his best, as Rod netted 16 goals in 70 games. Rod left pro hockey after two years in Muskegon and one year with the IHL's Dayton Gems to return to his hometown of Hancock and serve as a sheriff's deputy for Houghton County.

Rod's athletic prowess was recognized in 1985 with his induction into the Upper Peninsula (Michigan) Sports Hall of Fame for his hockey career and an all-Upper Peninsula football player at Hancock High School where he also set a pole vault record in track.