

2009 IHF

ProMOTION Plus is pleased to announce the three inspirational honorees of the In Her Footsteps Celebrating BC Women in Sport event.

Darlene Currie, the late Wendy Ladner-Beaudry and Shirley (Gordon) Olafsson were celebrated in the permanent exhibit celebrating women who have made a difference through sports for girls and women in British Columbia, whether through their own athletic excellence or by increasing opportunities for others. They join 40 additional women and teams who have been honored since the program began.



Darlene Currie, Shirley Olafsson and Michel Beaudry, husband of honoree Wendy Ladner-Beaudry

Despite being born with a clubfoot, honoree Shirley (Gordon) Olafsson became one of the worlds top high jumpers. As a child growing up with a club foot and many surgeries, I was always told I couldn't do anything in sport, she said. But I grew up and won championships, and I did it against able-bodied people.

Olafsson was so strongly motivated; she adapted the scissor technique in order to compete in the high jump, developing a unique style to accommodate her immovable left ankle. She went on to represent Canada at the 1948 London Olympics, and remained BCs champion jumper from 1945-1952. She also excelled in basketball and field hockey. You just have to keep on going. I struggled and struggled, even though I had not a hope in hell. In addition to her Olympic history, Olafsson has had a long and distinguished career as a coach, administrator and role model.

In Beijing during the 2008 Olympics, Olafsson was the oldest of 852 torch carriers. She has since brought that same Olympic torch into schools, allowing thousands of schoolchildren to run with the torch. Olafsson challenged future Canadian Olympic torchbearers to reach out to their communities in the same fashion, so all Canadians can share in the experience.

Honoree Darlene Currie has inspired and motivated women of all ages with her lifelong participation in sport. Currie played on the Canadian National Women's basketball team from 1959 to 1968, and then went on to coach the National team before beginning a long career of coaching in schools. Sport is fun, she said simply of her continued involvement with sport. You meet so many people and you want to share the good times.

Currie has continued to spread that sense of fun and community her entire life, notably helping to promote the involvement of older women in sports. She was instrumental in starting a curling league for older beginners and won

gold in the 2005 World Masters Games with what a later documentary later dubbed, The Oldest Basketball Team in the World.

The late Wendy Ladner-Beaudry was an exceptional mentor, administrator, volunteer and role model, in addition to being a nationally ranked swimmer, a member of BC and Ontario senior field hockey teams, and a Masters Champion in telemark skiing. Just before her death, Ladner-Beaudry was actively engaged in increasing participation among inactive women and girls from less privileged backgrounds than her own.

Kelly Mann, Chief Executive Officer of the B.C. Games Society, summed up Wendy's considerable influence on her community, Wendy's ideas were like pebbles dropped in a pond where the ripple effect of that pebble would connect with the ripples of other organizations to become this great wave of change.

An emotional Michel Beaudry spoke on behalf of his deceased wife. Sports can be a social tool for change, he said. If you teach a young woman about sports and fitness, you have a stronger, healthier, happier person. Wendy's style of activism was personal and intimate. Wendy was not afraid to work with people one at a time, one on one. Beaudry challenged the crowd to continue Wendy's work of advocacy and inspiration. Its important to realize how much we can change things if we try.