

OFFICIALS CATEGORY



Bill Green

Bill grew up in Wheaton, IL. where hockey was a pond game. Rathje Park, North Side Park, Lake Ellyn, awesome pond hockey. A big fan of the Blackhawks and the rare occasion that tickets were available at the old barn.

He got involved with the Carol Stream Squires house program and eventually when the family moved to Lombard, a short stint with the Glenbard East Hockey team and some great pond hockey at the Lombard Lagoon against Willowbrook.

Bill married his high school sweetheart and decided to supplement the family income returning to the ice as an official when not playing in men's league. Working games at Center Ice of Glen Ellyn, Downers Grove and Carol Stream, Bill met Dan Sanders.

Dan Sanders, then scheduling for the Glen Ellyn Flames, put Bill to work. From Mites to Midgets and of course late-night Men's league. Officiating seemed to fit.

Bill has always made himself available to the governing body of whatever program he's involved with. Hockey's IHOA was no different. Bill joined the Board of Directors where he became the Secretary and for a very short stint, the Registrar.

Bill was elected President of IHOA and presided over the board. A position he has valued ever since. The connections made during this time have become his greatest friends and memories.

During his time on the Board, the mentor program was born. During the first year, Bill was the initial mentor. Featured in the first IHOA mentor training film, Bill and Don Olynyk put together an on-ice video featuring two young officials working a real game. One of his proudest moments.

Bill has worked 3 different National Tournaments, several showcases, State Championships, High School League Finals, one time at the Allstate Arena (*Horizon*) and two times was able to skate at the United Center.

Bill worked many years as a certified instructor and continues today as an evaluator and tournament supervisor.

Bill can't even begin to list the hockey professionals and volunteers who have been and are part of his life. The number of AHA/IHOA members who came to the support of his family in 2018 when his son passed to a drug overdose is too long to list. With all the support from AHA and others, Illinois has a new law, Alex's Law, The Opioid Reduction Act.

Bill congratulates all the class of 2022 and all those inducted before us. He vows to stay involved at whatever level is needed.

Hockey is not just a game; it is a way of life.

COACHES CATEGORY

Ken Klein

Ken Klein was just six years old when his family moved to Northbrook and a neighbor knocked on the door, inviting Ken and his three younger brothers to join dozens of other neighborhood boys in playing hockey. That knock on the door came from Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame member (IHHF) Jim Rushing. And from it, Ken would spend the next five decades playing and coaching a sport he quickly grew to love.

Ken played for the Northbrook Hockey League and Glenbrook North High School throughout the 1960s and 1970s, later playing for the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. His passion for coaching started with the Can/Am Hockey schools, where he began as a player, then counselor, instructor, and, eventually, manager of the Can/Am Hockey Shop under the direction of founder Bob Murch.

As he began his corporate career, he continued to coach, beginning at Evanston Township High School, serving as an assistant to Bob Weidman and another IHHF member, Steve Glickman. In the mid-80s, Ken moved on to his alma mater, Glenbrook North, where as an assistant to IHHF coach Jim Friberg, the Spartans won back-to-back state championships. He was later named head junior varsity coach and together with his brother Bob, led the team to the state title in 1987.

Ken continued as head coach at Deerfield High School from 1988-90, where together with his brothers Bob and Chris, they mentored elite players including Rob Woodward, Todd Rierdon, Brian Carmen, Bill Polivin, and Mike Orzoff – all of whom would go on to excel as players and coaches themselves and some even advancing to play and coach in the National Hockey League. The Warriors were twice named one of the top three teams in the state and Ken was twice named an all-star coach. He later served as an assistant coach at the College of DuPage, where under the direction of Head Coach and IHHF 2022 inductee Tom Kurzawski and Athletic Director Herb Salberg, they won the 1990 National Junior College Athletic Association national championship. He also spent the 1991 season as the school's head coach.

In 1992, Ken started an 18-year tenure at Lake Forest College as assistant and goaltender coach under legendary multiple Hall of Fame member and nationally recognized coach Tony Fritz. During that time, LFC's goalies often led the nation in save percentage, goals-against average, and all-American honors. He also served as an assistant and goalie coach for the Foresters' women's team, working with legendary coaches like T.R. Bell, Susie Belize, and IHHF member Carissa Zaban Wahlig.

Following Ken's retirement from Lake Forest College in 2012, both he and Tony Fritz continued to mentor players by coaching the Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association's (GLASA) sled hockey program. The Falcons' adult team won the national championship within their tier in 2013. In 2019, Ken was the recipient of the Lake Forest College Golden Whistle award for his outstanding contributions through coaching, mentoring, and serving the athletic community.

Ken's success is due in large part to the foundation provided by his family – his high school sweetheart and wife of 39 years, Linda, and their two boys, Rob and Jon. They all shared in the love for hockey and spent countless hours at rinks together. That family-first approach was reflected in Ken's coaching style, always doing more than just coaching, but serving as a supportive friend and trusted mentor to so many young people involved in Illinois hockey.

Ken is grateful for the honor of becoming an IHHF member alongside his fellow 2022 inductees. He would like to thank AHAI and the selection committee for honoring him with this prestigious award.



COACHES CATEGORY

Tom Kurzawski

Tom Kurzawski grew up on the southwest side of Chicago. Tom learned to skate and play hockey on the ponds in the local parks. Tom's Dad would frequently come home from work and flood the ponds so the neighborhood kids could have a fresh sheet of ice to skate on. Tom developed his passion for hockey playing many hours on the ponds with his two brothers.

Tom attended Brother Rice High School following in the steps of his two brothers who had played hockey at Brother Rice before him. Tom played on the varsity for four years and as a freshman Tom played with 2009 A.H.A.I. Hall of Fame inductee Jim Augustine. The team that year won the Kennedy Cup at Oak Park Ridgeland Commons Ice Arena. Tom was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame at Brother Rice in 1980 and into the Athletic Hall of Fame at Brother Rice in 2004.



Tom attended Chicago State University and played hockey there for four years. Tom's first coach at Chicago State David "Doc" Rogers suggested to him he consider a career as a teacher and a coach. Tom's second coach at C.S.U., John "Chico" Wallin, was also instrumental in his coaching career as he hired Tom as an instructor for Can-Am hockey camps early in his coaching career. Tom graduated from C.S.U. with a degree in Business Education. He later received his Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Lewis University.

Tom was hired as a business teacher and head hockey coach at St. Laurence High School in 1981. Tom would continue to coach at St. Laurence for 20 years. His teams won the Kennedy Cup as well as the Catholic League Championship. Four of Tom's players won the Chicago Blackhawks Alumni award for Academic and Athletic accomplishment. Tom was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame at St. Laurence in 2011 and was chosen as the Chicago Blackhawks Coach of the Year in 1999. In addition to teaching at St. Laurence Tom also served as the Athletic Director, Admissions Director, and Assistant Principal at the high school.

Tom also coached at College of DuPage Junior College and the team won the 1990 Junior College National Championship. Ken Klein who is also a Hall of Fame recipient this year was the assistant coach for the 1990 team.

Tom was the Hockey Director at St. Jude Hockey Club for four years when his son began playing hockey and played through his Bantam years. Tom hired fellow Hall of Fame inductee Wally Naumenko as power skate and skill coach for the St. Jude club to assist in developing players. Tom has also coached for Team Illinois, the Chicago Hawks, and the Orland Park Vikings. Tom was active in player development for A.H.A.I., coaching the Illinois team in the Chicago Showcase Tournament for four years. In total, Tom coached for 33 seasons in the Chicago area.

Mr. Kurzawski recently retired after a 40-year career in education. After leaving St. Laurence Tom continued his career at Lockport High School where he was a Dean and Assistant Principal in his 17 years at the school.

Tom and his late wife Nora raised 3 children (Jenna, Doug, and Sarah) who were all varsity athletes and are graduates from Lockport High School.

PLAYER CATEGORY

Erika McKee



Erika grew up on the northwest side of Chicago alongside her 3 siblings and her parents, Tom and Patty Mitchell. She was introduced to sled hockey when she was 9 years old when she fell in love with the sport. Erika knew that this was the sport for her and since she was the only female she knew that she had to work even harder to be recognized. In 2005 she was asked to try out for the 20 and under sled hockey team (now known as the Men's Sled Development Team) and made it. She was one of the first women to join that team. In 2006 she was the first and only woman to be named captain of the 20 and under team. The next step from here was to try out for the National Sled Hockey Team. Tryouts came along and in 2008 Erika had decided that the next step in her sled hockey career was to try out for the National Team. Thirty minutes before these tryouts she was brought into a room with the coaches and her parents. Erika had no idea that this meeting would change her life forever.

She was told that because she was a female she would not make the team. Her dreams of becoming a paralympian were crushed. She felt defeated, Erika then had a conversation with her father and decided that she would still try out and support her male teammates who were actual contenders for that team. Being the first female to ever make it that far in hockey she wanted to make sure this never happened to another female coming up through the sled hockey pipeline. The second those tryouts were over she decided that her sled hockey career was nowhere near over. She talked with Tom Koester and Tom Brake, who had created the 20 and Under team, together they decided that it was about time we had something for the women in sled hockey to work towards. In 2008 the Women's National Sled Hockey team was formed. This was the start of the women's sled hockey movement across the world. It was now a goal for all the countries to help start women's sled teams and actually give females the chance to play in the paralympics.

While she was playing for the women's team she was also representing her club sled hockey team called the RIC Blackhawks. Her passion was giving back and her favorite way to give back was to help coach a youth sled hockey team called the Hornets. She loved watching the young talent learn the game and grow into the amazing athletes they are today. Erika likes to say hockey changed her life for the better and in 2009 she started dating her now husband Kevin McKee. He was one of her teammates on the 20 and under team and she had the honor of being by his side as he became a 3 time Paralympian in Para Ice Hockey.

March 9, 2014 is a day that will live with Erika forever. Her father, who had been there for her throughout her entire hockey career and helped her through the hardships of being the only female on all male hockey teams, had passed away. Devastated, Erika had struggled going back to hockey because she felt she had lost her motivation to play. Her father would always say, "Lifes tough, get a helmet". This quote stuck with Erika and she knew she had a job to do and she was not a quitter. With the help of her now husband, family, friends and amazing teammates she was able to find her fire again and returned to the ice.

Four years later in Czech Republic in 2018 the Women's World Cup was held. 12 countries were represented. This was a huge step forward for the Women's Para Ice Hockey movement. The moment this tournament ended the women were told by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) that there was not enough interest and they would not support the Women's Para Ice hockey movement. Again, Erika was absolutely crushed. Her dreams of becoming a Paralympian in Para Ice Hockey had never seemed so far away. The goal of making this team was to start a women's sled division in the Paralympics. The one good thing that came out of this situation was the USA Women's Para Ice hockey team was taken under the USA Hockey umbrella in 2018 with help of her good friends Jim Smith and JJ O'Connor.

Erika's induction into the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame means that she is opening up doors for females in sled hockey and that was her dream from the beginning. She would like to thank every woman that has been on the women's team that has helped our US team get to where they are today. She would like to thank her amazing husband Kevin McKee for being her rock and helping her stay strong when times were tough. She also would like to thank her parents for everything they had to sacrifice to get Erika to all her hockey tournaments and practices. It takes a village and If it wasn't for every one that has helped Erika along the way she would not be the athlete she is today.

PLAYER CATEGORY



Kevin McKee

Kevin McKee grew up in Davenport, Iowa also known as the Quad Cities. He loved watching sports as a child. He started playing sled hockey when he was 10 years old. His first time in a sled was with the local sled hockey program in Davenport called the TQCSHA. His first time on the ice he fell in love with being out of his wheelchair and it made him feel “Free”.

When Kevin was young he loved to make his friends in the neighborhood sit on skate boards and play sled hockey like him in the driveway. As Kevin got older he was introduced to more adaptive sports like wheelchair basketball. Wheelchair basketball was a bigger sport than sled hockey at the time he excelled in basketball, but his favorite sport was still hockey. He liked playing with the local sled hockey team but after taking a trip to Chicago to see the 2002 Paralympic team train, he told his parents it was a goal of his to be on that team when he got older. After seeing that team, Kevin was invited to attend a summer camp in 2016 which was for sled hockey players that showed potential to be on the USA Sled Hockey National Team. The camp was led by national team coaches and players on the USA team. Kevin was then asked after the camp to be on the USA under 20 Development Sled Hockey Team (now known as the Men’s Development team).

Kevin had tried out for the Men’s National team for three years in a row and every year he ended up on the 20 and Under team. Kevin wanted to bring his game to the next level so he decided to make a change. In 2009 Kevin moved to Chicago to train and go to school in hopes of one day making the USA National Sled Hockey Team. While he was on the 20 and Under Team team he met his now wife Erica (Mitchell) McKee. She had also played on the Ric Chicago Blackhawks Team, so it was an easy decision for Kevin to move to Chicago.

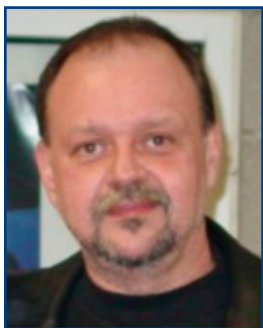
In 2010 Kevin finally achieved his goal of making the USA National Sled hockey Team. He also played on the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab Chicago Blackhawks. Living and training in Chicago was the best thing to ever happen to Kevin. He met his wife and together they loved to help coach the local sled hockey kids team called the Chicago Hornets. Giving back to the sport for Kevin is something he always loves to do, he believes if it wasn’t for the players and coaches before him he would not be where he is today. He wants to always help grow the sport when he can.

Kevin has now been to three Paralympic games (2014, 2018, 2022) and has been fortunate enough to win gold in all three. His favorite Paralympic games was 2018 because he was the extra man on the ice when they pulled the goalie and assisted on the pass to tie the game with 0.37 seconds left in the game. In overtime team USA scored just 3 minutes into overtime to win Gold.

In 2018 Erica and Kevin moved back to Kevin’s hometown of Davenport Iowa. They still play with the Shirley Ryan Chicago Blackhawks team. He is still currently on the USA National Sled Hockey Team and is training for the 2026 Paralympic games. Since moving back home he has been in real estate and rental properties with his dad Brian McKee. Kevin’s goal is to hopefully win another gold medal and to retire from the USA team after the 2026 games.

Kevin’s induction to the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame means so much to him because sled hockey has been his life for the past 22 years and the city of Chicago helped him have a career on the USA Team. Kevin thanks Derek Daniels, Patrick Byrne, JJ O’Connor and Jim Smith for helping him become the player he is today. Kevin also wants to thank his family for always supporting his dream of being on Team USA.

COACHES CATEGORY



Wally Naumenko

Wally Naumenko was born and raised in the Burnside neighborhood in Southeast Chicago. The 6'6" Son of Ukrainian immigrants was known as "Big Wally," but not just for his height, but rather his big heart and passion for coaching. His father was a steel worker at Bethlehem Steel for 46 years and mother worked as a hairdresser. This year would have marked his 50th wedding anniversary to the real MVP of this story, Wally's wife Connie. Wally passed away in 2006.

His introduction to hockey was on the neighborhood ponds around Chicago. In 1978 after taking his 4 year old son Nick to a Chicago Blackhawks' game, they met the great Bobby Orr, who signed the cast of son Nick's broken arm. His son was hooked and so was he! He began coaching that year for Illiniwek out of Southwest Ice Arena.

Wally coached the Chicago Jets and Chicago Hawks out of the Saints Spectrum through the early 80's having great success building Southside Chicago hockey and competing all over the US and Canada. Wally was a pioneer not only in his training methods, but also in bridging Chicago's Southside and North Shore players. In the 1987-88 season, Wally assembled a very diverse group of young men to play for The Chicago Young Americans AAA Bantam Major team that went on to win back to back National Championships at the Bantam and Midget levels. In 1988-89 his Chicago Young American midget minor team (all 16 year olds at the time) had one of the greatest runs in youth hockey history winning the Midget National Championship vs the Chicago Young American midget major team in a triple overtime game at Glenview Ice Arena.

Wally continued coaching AAA hockey through the 90's while managing American Heartland Ice Arena and watching his 3 sons grow up around the rinks. Sons Nick and Gregg both enjoyed successful playing careers including a stint where they played together for the Chicago Wolves in 2005 shortly before Wally's passing. Nick was drafted in 1992 by the St. Louis Blues, played college Hockey at the University of North Dakota and went on to play 15 years professionally. Gregg played Division I for the University of Alaska Anchorage before reaching the NHL with the Anaheim Mighty Ducks. Wally's youngest son Russ followed in his footsteps and began working at the ice rink and coaching at an early age. Russ has spent 20 years at Heartland Ice Arena, the last 16 as GM and Hockey Director, where he developed the same passion for coaching as his Dad did.

Many of Wally's former players caught the hockey bug for life and have made a career out of hockey as players, coaches, hockey directors, scouts, NHL agents and more."

COACHES CATEGORY

Jim Philbin

Jim was born in Chicago, Illinois, and was raised in Glenview, Illinois, and attended Our Lady of Perpetual Help middle school. Jim started skating at a very young age. When he was four years old, his parents, Martin and Arlene, would take him to Roosevelt Park in Glenview so he could skate on the outdoor rink. Jim loved skating right from the start so his parents enrolled him in skating and hockey programs at the Glenview Ice Center and was coached by Wally Kormylo.



Jim joined the Glenview Stars Hockey program and played at the mite and squirt levels. He was then invited to try out for the AAA Chicago Jesters and the AAA Chicago Minor Hawks. He chose to play for the Chicago Jesters for his first year of AAA and then with the Chicago Saints. Jim played for the Chicago Minor Hawks for his Bantam through Midget/Junior levels.

Jim attended Loyola Academy High School where he was double-rostered on the Varsity team (FR/SO) while also playing AAA with the Chicago Minor Hawks. He attended New England College (D2) for his first year of college hockey and then transferred to the University of Minnesota. While in Minnesota, he was asked to assist with the Burnsville Youth Hockey program, which is where he began his coaching career.

After completing his studies at the University of Minnesota, Jim was recruited by AT&T and started working with the same company he still works for today as a 911 Sr. Program Manager. He transferred from his offices in Minnesota to an office in Chicago and then reunited with his former Midget/Junior Coach Jeff Roche. Jeff was with the Chicago Young Americans and asked Jim to help him run tryouts and run skills for his team. Jim then joined Jeff with the Wilmette Braves for a season, and then Myles Gottainer reached out to Jim about a coaching vacancy with the Glenbrook South High School Hockey team. Jim interviewed for the job with the GBS board and was offered the coaching position.

Jim started as the JV Head Coach and moved to the Varsity Head Coach and Hockey Director position a year and a half later. He has been with GBS for 32 years. He is a seventeen-time Metro North All-Star Coach, 4-time AHAI All-State Coach, Chicago Showcase Team Coach, Hockey Stop Coach of the Year, AHAI Coach of the Year, Chicago Blackhawk Alumni Coach of the Year, and two-time Scholastic Hockey League (SHL) Coach of the Year. Aside from coaching at GBS, Jim also has coached with Team Illinois and has been coaching with the Glenview Stars program for 25 years. He has won numerous tournaments, league, and state championships at youth and high school levels.

Jim wants to congratulate his fellow Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame class. He is truly honored to be part of a prestigious group of members of the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame. He also would like to thank the Glenview Stars organization leadership, the Glenbrook South Titan Hockey past, and current board members, and his family.

OFFICIALS CATEGORY

Geoff Schlender

Geoff began his hockey career with his younger brother Jason skating in practices with the 1975 Kennedy Cup Champion St. Rita Mustangs which were coached by his father Bob. (St. Rita HOF 2021). Since his father was also a player on the first St. Rita hockey team in 1964, it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that he would continue in those footsteps.

His youth playing career involved playing for southside teams such as the Spartans, Bulldogs, Jets, and St. Jude before he continued in high school at St. Rita playing for Jim Misiora (IHOF 2008). His competitive playing career came to a close by serving as a multi-year Captain at Marquette University.

He was also active very active in coaching before his focus shifted to officiating. Working with Steve Glickman (IHOF 2008), he instructed at Can/Am Hockey Schools and Varsity Hockey Camps. They also coached the Loyola Academy Junior Varsity State Champions in 1992. After that title, Jim Misiora reached out and offered Geoff to begin his multiple years as the Junior Varsity head coach at St. Rita. Geoff has also served in various coaching capacities with the Chicago Hawks and Vikings organizations throughout the years.

In 1993, with former high school teammate Bill Gray, it was decided that they would “switch roles” as Geoff would teach Bill coaching and Bill would teach Geoff officiating. Geoff contributes his success in officiating to understanding that players, coaches, officials, and administrators all need to work together to achieve a fun, safe, and competitive environment by respecting the roles of each other.

Fellow inductee Bill Green pursued and recruited Geoff shortly thereafter and asked him to run for election to the IHOA Board of Directors. Geoff has served as Treasurer of IHOA since 1994 and was also deemed “Treasurer for Life” by Don Allord (IHOF 2008).

In addition to his role as Treasurer, Geoff has been a Certified USA Hockey Referee Instructor and also received the Tom Osiol Award as IHOA Instructor of the year in 2011. Along with Sjoukje Brown (IHOF 2014), they started the IHOA Performance Education and Development Program. He also worked with the mentoring, supervisor, and evaluation programs throughout the years.

Geoff has officiated many games at all levels from Mite to College throughout his career. He has worked USA Hockey National Championships, Chicago Showcases, and even the High School State Championship at the United Center in 2002. He continues to officiate a light schedule as his son Jonathan, a Freshman at Providence Catholic, is currently a Level 2 official and also a Junior Coach with the Chicago Blackhawks Special Hockey program.

Geoff resides in Homer Glen with his loving wife Angela of over twenty years and practices as a CPA in Joliet. To Geoff, being elected to the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame is quite a humbling achievement and certainly an honor to be in the company of fellow inductees and those who have been inducted in the past.



BUILDERS CATEGORY



Mike Schmitt

Mike Schmitt grew up in downtown Chicago and at the age of 8 he became interested in the game of hockey. He attended various hockey clinics, played in house and senior leagues at Rainbo arena.

In 1967/68 Mike selected to play with the Cicero Flyers as an alternate captain. The team won the state championship in the midget category and Mike was selected MVP.

He was selected captain for Chicago Junior Olympics Junior division. He participated with Reggie Fleming in the NHL hockey school held at Glenwood Ice Arena. Mike also did a short coaching stint at the Loyola University Hockey club.

He began teaching his own hockey clinics specializing in teaching skating skills. Mike managed the Twin Ice Forum. He played on the Chicago Cardinals hockey team. He also participated in Stan Mikita's Hearing Impaired Hockey School. Mike also managed the Willow Ice Chalet, participated in Dennis Hull hockey school where he met his hockey idol, Bobby Hull.

Mike attended the New England Whalers hockey camp. He was invited to the St Louis Blues Hockey training camp, suffered an injury that ended his NHL dreams but was able to recover enough to play with the Milwaukee Admirals.

Mike spent several years coaching with the Chicago Minor Hawks as well as Team Illinois.

Mike considers this a great honor and he is truly humbled and honored to be included in this class.

Congratulations to all 2022 inductees.

BUILDERS CATEGORY



Eric Schneider

Eric was born and raised in Rochester, Minnesota and is the 2nd oldest of 4 boys. He and his brothers grew up playing hockey on the outdoor rinks in southern Minnesota. Prior to coming to Illinois, Eric played 2 years of Junior hockey in the USHL for his hometown team where he won back-to-back National Championships (1987 & 1988) as the team captain of the Rochester Mustangs.

Eric was awarded a scholarship to play college hockey for the Division I University of Illinois Chicago Flames (UIC), where he quickly fell in love with the Windy City. After a successful hockey and academic college career, Eric earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business and Management.

Upon graduation, head coach Larry Pedrie hired Eric as an assistant hockey coach at UIC, his alma mater, where he would spend the next 4 years as a Division I assistant coach and recruiter. Once the hockey program was dissolved, Eric spent the next season coaching the Northern Illinois University ACHA Division II hockey team to a National Tournament. He also spent a year coaching the Chicago Bluesmen Professional Roller Hockey team and other various Illinois youth hockey programs.

In 1997, Eric again teamed up with Larry Pedrie and created the Chicago Chill AAA Hockey Club (Now operating as the Chicago Fury AAA). During this time, he also served as the General Manager and Hockey Director for the Glacier Ice Arena in Vernon Hills. Eric was also instrumental in forming and coaching many Women's hockey teams in the early 2000's and coached Team Glacier to a State Championship.

In 1999, the Glacier Ice Arena in Vernon Hills was opened, and Eric was tasked with the Hockey Director and General Manager as well as building a program from the surrounding area. 23 years later he is still involved in the same capacity at the Glacier. After the Chill moved to the southern suburbs in 2001, Eric started the Ice Dogs Hockey League (IDHL) and grew the program to over 400 kids by 2005. The strength in IDHL numbers allowed Eric to start the Ice Dogs Hockey Association (IDHA) Tier II program in 2006, where he is still currently the Hockey Director.

Over the years, Eric has been lucky to coach 1000's of youth hockey players, serve on multiple AHAI and USA hockey selection committees, youth hockey boards, and is currently a member of the NIHL Executive Board.

Eric currently lives in Long Grove Illinois with his wife Emily and there 4 kids (Cole 20, Camden 18, Calleigh 16, and Kyla14).

BUILDER CATEGORY



Gary Wells

Gary was born and raised in Springfield, Illinois. He graduated from Lanphier High School and then from Lincoln Land Community College. In 1975, he married Nancy Bernahl; and in 1976, he joined the Springfield Police Department serving the City of Springfield as a police officer for 29 years. In 1980, his son, Aaron, was born and then in 1984, his son Justin was born. Gary's journey into the sport of hockey began in early 1987 when Aaron began a learn to play session with the Springfield Youth Hockey Association (SYHA) at the Springfield Park District Nelson Center Ice Rink.

Later that fall, Aaron began playing travel hockey on a Mite B team. Gary volunteered to serve as the age group chairperson for the SYHA Board of Directors. In the 1989-90 season, he was then approved by the Board of Directors to fulfill the duties of Vice President when the position was vacated. During the 1990-91 season, Gary was elected President of the SYHA Board of Directors. He served as President for 2 years and then another 2 years as Past President for the SYHA Board of Directors. In the 1994-95 season, he served as House League Coordinator for SYHA.

In 1995, Gary was inducted into the Springfield Youth Hockey Hall of Fame. Bill Coombe, a 2006 Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame (IHOF) inductee and long time referee, once said, "without referees there are no hockey games". In 1990, he received his first patch as a referee and continued refereeing until he retired in the 2021-22 season. In 1993, an opportunity arose to coach and he became head coach of Justin's SYHA Squirt B teams and then later his Peewee A teams and 1st year Bantam A team and assistant coach for his 2nd year Bantam A team. In 2002-03, the coaching bug bit again and he coached a House League team for SYHA.

In 1998, the Friends of the Nelson Center Committee, spearheaded by Ann Coombe, approached the Springfield Park District with a proposal for the construction of a second ice rink due to the expansion of SYHA and the success of a NAHL Junior team, the Springfield Jr. Blues. On February 13, 2001, the Springfield Park District Board voted to approve the construction of a second rink. The idea of a High School Hockey League came to fruition. Before construction began in 2001 on the second rink at the Nelson Center, Gary, along with other hockey enthusiasts, explored the idea of a High School Hockey League. A Board of Directors was formed and he was elected as the inaugural President of the Lincoln Land High School Hockey League. League play finally began on January 28, 2002. He served as President of the Lincoln Land High School Hockey League through the 2013-14 season. During his tenure as President of the Lincoln Land High School Hockey League, the purpose of the league was to ensure that Springfield area high school hockey players received the attention and respect from their high school peers, just as other high school athletes received.

On May 15, 2002, in appreciation of outstanding service which had significantly improved the quality of life within the Springfield community, Gary was presented with the Springfield Police Department Abraham Lincoln Award for his help in establishing the Lincoln Land High School Hockey League and his ongoing work with the operation of the league.

In his 35 years of being involved with youth hockey, his greatest satisfaction has come from seeing players who started playing on their high school hockey teams back in 2002, now serving as coaches and referees, continuing to help Springfield-area hockey players to share and cultivate a love of the sport of hockey for future generations.

BUILDER CATEGORY

Jim Wood

Jim grew up on the north side of Chicago in Rogers Park in the early 60's. He was taught to skate and introduced to hockey by his father, Merle, who had played high school hockey in the 1930's on the Iron Range of Minnesota. Since there was little or no organized youth hockey available during his grammar school years, Jim played on a duck pond at Indian Boundary Park as well as other flooded parks in the neighborhood.

Jim played for Quigley North High school from 1967 -1971. Most of the games were played at Ridgeland Commons in Oak Park. At that time the rink was covered, but the sides were open allowing winter elements to have an effect. After graduating from high school Jim attended St. John's University in Minnesota for one year. He knew this hockey experience was going to be a bit different when he was handed his jersey. It was wool. St. John's only had an outdoor rink. After his freshman year he transferred to St. Norbert College. Jim played club hockey for SNC from 1972 -1975. He also served as president of the club in his senior year.

Jim married his bride Colleen in 1976 and began a family. He went to work as a sales manager for Whiteway Sign and in 1985 sold the large red scoreboard to Bill Wirtz and Jerry Reinsdorf for the Chicago Stadium. This began a 33 year career where he was responsible for the manufacturing and installation of more than 50 professional and NCAA scoreboard/signage systems across the USA and Canada. Because he was travelling so much, Jim began to take his daughters Katie and Ryanne to free skate sessions at the Northbrook ice rink on weekends. When his son Tom decided to try hockey, he became a volunteer for the Northbrook Blue Hawks. There he helped develop the pre -mite program and entered his youngest son, Dan, into that program. While at Northbrook Jim coached the half year travel team and other levels over a period of 10 years. In 1997 Stevenson high school recognized Hockey as a varsity sport and Jim was hired by Vee Lacroix as an assistant coach. He would stay at Stevenson for 19 years.

In 2002 Jim was elevated to the Varsity Coach/Hockey Director for Stevenson. Along with his sons, Tom and Dan, Jim built Stevenson into one of the Chicago area's top hockey programs. In 2007 the Chicago Blackhawks Alumni Association awarded Jim the Billy Reay Coach of the Year award. In 2008 AHAI presented Jim with the High School Coach of the year award at the United Center. That ceremony took place beneath the scoreboard that he had sold to the United Center when it opened. The Patriots won two Metro North Championships, two Metropolitan Scholastic Cup Championships, and reached the elite eight of the state tournament seven times under his direction. When the Scholastic hockey league was formed, Jim saw to it that Stevenson became one of the original members of this competitive high school league. Stevenson remains a member of the SHL to this day and as of this writing is the reigning State High School Champion.

Jim is honored to be inducted into the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame along with the other 2022 inductees. He is most thankful to the numerous coaches, parents, administrators, referees, and players who helped him along the way. A special thanks to his wife Colleen for giving up countless Saturday nights and to his sons Tom and Dan who continue to coach at Stevenson.

