



John McKeachie (1961)

Hall of Fame Victoria sports broadcaster John McKeachie dies at 82

John McKeachie was a sportsman right to the end, requesting his youngest daughter Liane keep him updated on the Blue Jays baseball score Tuesday evening.

The legendary sports broadcaster from Victoria died at age 82 in Vancouver.

McKeachie started out covering Island sports for the old CKDA radio station before moving on to CKNW and BCTV in Vancouver and national television, covering the Olympics, Canucks and NHL and the B.C. Lions and CFL.

McKeachie was inducted into the Victoria Sports Hall of Fame in 2012 and the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame this year.

His engaging and jocular personality and style entertained and informed thousands of sports fans in a career spanning more than four decades. Despite his national exposure, McKeachie's Island roots always ran deepest. He cherished a stick given to him at age five by hockey legend Lester Patrick, the architect of the Victoria Cougars' 1925 Stanley Cup championship.

"It's the passion and heritage this city brings to sport and which is passed from one generation to the next," said McKeachie, on the night in 2012 when he followed his father and two uncles into the Victoria Sports Hall of Fame.

McKeachie was a true original and had a self-deprecating style that was all his own. The 1961 Vic High graduate loved to mention that he played high school basketball for the Totems but that the

team had won the B.C. championship in 1959, the year before he got there, and again in 1962, the year after he graduated. So, what did that say about him, McKeachie would quip.

McKeachie was plenty good enough, it turned out, and he had the genes. Dad Ian McKeachie was a standout part of the Victoria Blue Ribbons and Dominoes Canadian championship basketball dynasty of the 1930s and 1940s, which produced Olympic silver medallists Doug Peden, and Art and Chuck Chapman.

John McKeachie went on to star in basketball for the University of Victoria, where his jovial and prankster nature was never far from hand. Not getting much playing time during one game, McKeachie went from the bench to the pay phone in the old UVic gym and ordered a pizza and had it delivered to him on the bench and took a bite while the game was in progress as the crowd howled in laughter.

The penchant for the witty and unusual angle was always evident in his broadcasting career, like the time the six-foot-eight McKeachie tried to fit into a aerodynamic tight-clinging luge suit during a CTV segment during its coverage of the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics.

When a caller would phone the station asking about pro wrestling results, McKeachie would ask: "Do you want tonight's or next week's?"

McKeachie was voted *TV Week Magazine's* B.C. sports broadcaster of the year on three occasions during his 27-year run at BCTV from 1973 to 1999. He said his love of sports began when he walked onto the National Little League baseball diamond the day it opened wedged between Hillside and Cook streets in 1953: "Myself and [former New York Yankees prospect George Hemming] were nine-years-old. It was a dirt field because grass wasn't put in until 1954. I still remember putting on my Oddfellows team jersey for the first time at my house before the first game at the park and thinking it was a biggest deal happening. My love of sports was fuelled from there."

And it was a wide-ranging passion, including covering the Olympics when CTV had the rights and also hosting on CBC's *Hockey Night in Canada*, with the typical McKeachie quirky sidenote of him having designed the original California Golden Seals logo when they entered the NHL in 1967-68.

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