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TSN personality to recognize best in sports at Hall of Fame ceremony



By Jake Courtepatte

For the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame (ASHoF), they want the best in the biz to introduce the newest members into their hallowed halls.

That's why they have once again enlisted the help of TSN personality and Canadian sports host legend James Duthie to be Master of Ceremonies at this year's ASHoF induction dinner.

?We are delighted to have Mr. Duthie return to our celebration activities,? said ASHoF project manager Nancy Black. ?His knowledge of local and national sports is extensive and his community pride is evident. As well, he can tell humorous or heartwarming sport stories better than anyone else and as such, makes for the perfect Master of Ceremony.?

Last year's sold-out crowd enjoyed both the comedic and serious sides of Mr. Duthie, an Aurora resident who takes the importance of local sports to heart.

Duthie's kids were born in the Danforth in Toronto, where he lived for a number of years before being hit with the need to ?get away.?

?We were just looking for a nice town, looked around Aurora and we were easily convinced,? said the father of three, who moved his family to the area in 2008.

His community involvement in those seven-or-so years has led him to meet and grow close with parents from his son's hockey team, and his daughters' soccer and swim teams.

?Most of the people I know in the town are because of that. So when I think of the role of sports in a community, I think of what it does to bring the community together.?

Aside from the social aspect, Duthie recognizes the importance of local sports at a physical and psychological level as well.

?I think in many ways, sports are the backbone of a community. One of the reasons I chose Aurora is that they recognize that?there's so much to do, and so much is offered.?

Sport Aurora, the governing body of the ASHoF, has grown to a membership of almost 30 organizations since its roots a decade ago. While 2015 has been announced as the ?Year of Sport? in Aurora, Sport Aurora looks to enshrine the legacies of a handful of local athletes, builders, and volunteers in this year's induction dinner, scheduled for November.

As a long-time sports fan himself, and one who has been recognized with three Gemini Awards and one Canadian Screen Award, Duthie would be the first to tell you how much it means to be recognized by your community.

?The history of a community is so important. How often do we hear people say, ?Connor McDavid's from Newmarket,' or people from Aurora say ?Ryan Murphy (Carolina Hurricanes defenceman) is from Aurora.' There's a certain pride that comes from that, for both the individual and the community.?

Now in his second year as MC of the event, Duthie admits he entered the 2014 dinner with little to no knowledge of some of the inductees, particularly those of the builders class. He said he has always found it interesting while visiting local rinks to see their own shrines to local legends, finding out who was from where?and it was about time Aurora did the same.

?There are so many great people in this town, I know how much it means not only to the community, but to the individual, who may have put in countless hours on the rink or on the field without being recognized.?

With this year's inductees announced, tickets to this year's induction dinner will be available soon. You can follow along at www.aurorashof.ca.