

TV host, disabled sports champion take their spots in Aurora Sports Hall of Fame



By Jake Courtepatte

Last week, The Auroran touched on two new inductees into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame's hallowed halls: volleyball star Mark Heese and Canadian tennis icon Kenneth Sinclair.

This week, we shift focus to the Hall of Fame's two other newest members: Alan Dean and Lowell McClenney.

When Mr. Dean, a long-time advocate in establishing sports programs for the disabled, took the stage at the annual induction dinner, the first thing he acknowledged was that his journey in sports has been a little ?different.?

Having arrived in Aurora fifty years ago, he has been involved in community sports since the beginning, joining the Aurora Soccer Club shortly thereafter.

?Everything was going along swimmingly, when one fateful day, August 5, 1974, I got hit,? he said. ?My leg was broken, and thirty hours later I was an amputee fighting for my life.?

To Mr. Dean, St. Andrew's College was an apt setting for the dinner: it was there a teacher from the prep school, Gary West, helped Mr. Dean ease into his new life shortly after the incident through swimming.

His association with St. Andrew's doesn't end there. In the late 60s and early 70s, he refereed soccer games at the school, recalling the good times he had on the job with 2014 hall inductee Ben Steenhorst.

It was after attending a seminar for disabled athletes and meeting those in a similar condition that Mr. Dean was inspired to continue in sport, and was able to reach the podium twice at the 1976 Ontario Games.

He went on to be instrumental in the forming of the Ontario Amputee Sports Association later that year as well as the Canadian Amputee Sports Association in 1977. He had spells as president of both.

?I got to meet so many talented and influential people, and made so many memories?it's been an absolutely amazing experience for me.?

Having traveled to all corners of the globe as an ambassador and delegate for many different organizations, Mr. Dean was humbled in his acceptance of his latest honour.

?If I would have thought this would happen to me 40 years ago, I would have said ?ha! No chance.' And sometimes I really have to

pinch myself.?

He closed off his speech by telling the crowd to look at life's challenges as opportunities.

?I've been very fortunate in my life to take advantage of this, and I encourage you all to take advantage of your own disabilities.?
Mr. Dean joins Ken Sinclair as the 2015 inductees into the ?Builders? category of the hall.

While he acknowledges that it was ?interesting? to once be interviewed on Iranian television, he claims it was not the same as being interviewed by his fellow inductee, Lowell McClenney, on his long-time TV program Sports Beat.

Mr. McClenney's induction was a first for the hall in its three year history, receiving the inaugural Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Media Award for his run of almost three decades on Aurora Cable.

His speech began with a trip to the past, reciting his opening lines that Aurora residents heard throughout his time as host of the popular Sports Beat.

?Welcome sports fans, to this week's edition of Sports Beat Aurora. Yours truly Lowell McClenney, I'm your host. Tonight we are here at the prestigious St. Andrew's College where we are involved with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame induction. I have been asked by many people tonight if they can be interviewed on the show, but you're all too old.?

The last line drew quite a laugh from the large crowd of attendees.

To Mr. McClenney, the induction has enticed him to review tapes over the past few weeks from his many shows, and remember the fun he had on Sunday afternoons in a repurposed house on Yonge Street.

?We gave a voice for the sports community,? he said. ?I know a lot of people tonight that have been on the show. It was an opportunity for kids to be a hero or sports personality for a week.?

He was quick to thank Jim Irvine, the founder of Aurora Cable in 1969, for helping to build, in his opinion, ?the best community cable internet station we will ever see.?

Aurora Cable's station manager, Steve Mitchell, also received warm regards, for ?believing in Sports Beat Aurora and helping making it what it was.?

Mr. McClenney thanked the countless volunteers, who worked behind the cameras to produce the show, whom ?without their dedication the show never would have aired.?

Last but certainly not least, he acknowledged his family and wife Carolyne of 52 years, who in the early years of the show helped type out the results from the local papers.

?And also, even up to the last show, taped every segment on our VCR.?

He closed his speech as he opened it ? in the same manner as he did in his over 1,800 aired episodes.

?Well sports fans, that's the show for the week. Remember, sports and drugs don't mix. If you're gonna be a sport, be a good one.?

