

## Looking back with Gail and Ted Hampson

2004 - Reminder Author: Gail Baker

Gail is the daughter of Fred and Phyllis Lockhart. The family came to Flin Flon in 1944 when Gail was five years-old and her sister Lynn was one year-old.

Fred brought his family to Flin Flon because, like many others, he was looking for work. He hired on with HBMS and worked underground for a few years. Then he built a garage on Ross Lake Island (where the Grey Goose bus garage is now) and he called his garage Gail Motors. In the summers, Gail got the summer job of windshield washer. The family home was on Hill Street and Gail went to Main School till grade six and then on to Hapnot where she finished her grade 12 and went on to nursing. Gail recalls going to school with Merle Riley, Ann Sabo, Eileen Reese, Carolyn Wardle, Wanda Leary, Jackie Masson, Faye Milne and Erla Lawson. It was during her high school years that she met Edward George (Ted) Hampson who soon became the love of her life!

Originally Ted had come from Togo, Saskatchewan. The family (his dad Joe, mom Adele, brothers Sterling (Sterk), Winston and sisters Jule and Evolda. Ted was the youngest) had moved to The Pas when he was eight years-old. Ted's dad bought a hardware store there. Ted lived there for one year and then came up to Flin Flon with his mom Adele, his brothers and sisters in 1945. Ted's mother's family lived in Flin Flon. They were Art and Florence McInnis (renowned for her curling and her quilting), Ernie and Lorna Young, Ray and Ada McInnis, Ted and Melva McInnis as well as cousins Howard and Vernice Henry, Ron and Anne Henry, Elaine and Joe Wilson and families. Ted said that his sister Evolda taught him to skate when they still lived in Togo. At first he would skate from one pillar to another in the rink and then when the family moved to The Pas, Ted skated a lot and became a "decent" skater, he smiles. "I never had a hockey stick in my hands till I came to Flin Flon," relates Ted. Ted attended school from grades 4 to 6 at Main School and then on to Hapnot through to grade 12.

The family lived on North Avenue just below the Company cafeteria and he and some friends would play hockey at a small rink at the Company apartments. Ted remembers how Slim and Dot Holdaway and Eric and Smitty Austin would let the kids warm-up in their apartments and gave them hot chocolate. He learned to play hockey with Jimmy Austin, Jim Holdaway, George Mooney, Vernon Rowe and Bob Davie along with Pinkie's six team Pee Wees (9-12 year olds) who played every Saturday morning at the Main Arena (later to become the Whitney Forum).

All the parents paid a small fee to belong to the Flin Flon Community Club and then all the kids got to play hockey for free. Of course they had to supply their own hockey equipment, "which in those days were flimsy shin pads and no helmets," smiles Ted. "Frank Doran ran the league for Pinkie Davie in those days," relates Ted, "and the Junior Bombers had just started about 1948."

The Uptown gang that Ted remembers playing hockey with included George Komanac, Roger Cathcart, Jack Kepper, David Keddie, Don Storjord, Greg Krokosz, "Punchy" Merle McCaig and Bob Sorenson. Some of the Ross Lake gang included Ron Hutchinson, Ernie Poirier and Carl Forster. "As kids we also spent a lot of time at the Stag Pool Hall and Cliff Bernard was the best pool player!" "We also were involved in high school curling and we had some great teachers like Archie Thom, Mr. Katt, Mr. Marshall, Isobel Rex, Miss Patterson and Miss Black, but the best teacher was Glen Nichol who really got involved in sports such as the high school hockey, minor hockey and field days for school."

Ted said, "I had two older brothers and two older sisters and used to watch and listen when their friends hung around our home. One Christmas one of my brothers' friends, Johnny Akert, gave me a golf club for Christmas. After that it was hockey in the winter and golf in the summer! "Guys who were a great inspiration to me and who I considered pioneers of sport in Flin Flon were: Pinkie Davie, Nick Iannone, Buddy Simpson, Eddie Longmore, Walt Cunningham, Jim Cook, Clarke, Guy, Pete and John Hume as well as Eddie Gee, Bob Longmore and Duncan Hogaboam." Ted wanted to acknowledge these and so many others who had given him such great support in those early years. Some of Ted's golf buddies in the early years were Ray Quinn, Chris Bannick and Ron Wiebe.

Ted went on to say, "A bunch of us guys started hard ball. We'd play every Saturday morning during the summer



with teams such as the Royals, Johnny's and Ostrys' etc. Then eventually the league became known as the Senior League (Polar) and the team I was on beat the Cardinals who had guys like Harvey Flemming, Lee Fisher and Al Mealy. But we had a pitcher named Ken Smith and they couldn't beat him."

"In our early hockey years," Ted said, "members of the Junior Bombers would come out and help coach us as honorary coaches when they weren't on the road. I remember Marlo McDonald (his brother Abby played in the NHL) and Hugh McKay were just a couple of the guys who helped me out." "Then in Midgets (ages 13-16) I played for the Rotary team with Don Mitchell as the coach and we'd play the Elks who were the strongest team in that league. They had Phil Faford, Mel Pearson, Ernie Poirier and Ron Hutchinson on their team. I played two years for the Juvenile Flyers team with Dutchy Dick as the coach. By now we belonged to the 'Rink Rats' which were the ones who cleaned the ice and flooded it for the Bomber games, all by hand in those days. "We had a very strong Juvenile team losing only two games in two years. We won the Manitoba Juvenile Championship with guys like Ron Hutchinson, Ken Willey, George Komanac, Lynn Grant, Al McMurray, Len Iles and Kenny Mervold and others. "Some of the guys would get called up from time to time to play with the Bombers. "The thing was, when we were still going to school, the rule was that we could only take one out of town trip during the year. So some of us would only play home games like Carl Foster and George Konik and myself.

"Then once we finished school in the 1955-56 season we got to play the full year with the Junior Bombers. We were playing in the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League. It was a 48 game schedule split with 24 games at home and 24 away. The guys on the team that year were Walt Peacosh, Lyle Willey, Gord Redahl, Ernie Poirier, Harvey Flemming, Mel Pearson, Ron Hutchinson, George Konik, Ken Willey, Len Bolton, Bob Kortje, Frank Kubica was the goalie, Brian Bell and Bobby Kirk was the coach. "We won the league championship and then in the playoffs for the next division we played the Regina Pats and lost in the seventh game. "By this time Gail was in Winnipeg in nurses training.

"Then at the beginning of the 1956-57 season, the press was all over us because we had lost a lot of good players and they said we wouldn't go anywhere. That just got us riled up even more. We had a good bunch of guys and we got along well. "Well, as it turned out we started winning and the more we won, the better our confidence got and we ended up winning the League Championship playing some really tough teams. In the games against Regina Pats, the Prince Albert Mintos and ourselves, we met P.A in the finals, it was a tough series but we managed to pull it off. Next we had to play the Edmonton Oil Kings. The first two games we played in Flin Flon with the third game being played in Prince Albert because the series had to be finished by a certain date and they were trying to cut down the traveling time. We won that series and then had to go on to play the Fort Williams Canadians in the Western Final. Well, we won four straight, two in Flin Flon and two in Fort William.

"Then the Memorial Cup was against the Hull/Ottawa Canadians. The series started late because Sam Pollock, their GM and coach, and Scotty Bowman the assistant coach, tried every tactic in the book to get the series out of Flin Flon and into a bigger centre. They thought this was going to be a lark and they just wanted to get it over with. "Finally, two days after it was supposed to have started, the teams got underway. We had watched them in practice and knew they wouldn't out skate us. So we just decided well, they still wore two skates, the same as us, so what's the problem! The more negative the press and the publicity got the more determined we became.

"The first game they won 3-1 and then we won the next two, 4-3 and 5-2. The odds against us were 80-1. And the rest they say is history." When asked when it really hit him that they had won the Memorial Cup, Ted said, "Well the first four days after the game there were receptions in Melville, Yorkton and the train even stopped in The Pas in the early hours of the morning and we all had to get dressed because the Town of The Pas presented each of us with mink bow ties.

"When we arrived in Flin Flon, we got off the train at Channing and they had cars for all of us. We were paraded through town and up on Main Street a temporary stage had been set up outside the Post Office. I remember there must have been 2,000 people packed into the area. Some were hanging from the telephone poles and all the school kids were there. That is when it really hit us! We never realized we had affected so many people! And 47 years later people are still coming up to me and congratulating me!" Ted went on to say, "My ambition as a young player was to play for the Bombers, and then we set our sights on the Memorial Cup."

Ted explained that in those days, it was the days of Sponsorship when the six NHL teams monopolized the hockey world and would sponsor a junior team. Originally Detroit was Flin Flon's sponsor till Detroit put Ullman and Litke in the Ontario League. Flin Flon got upset and went with the New York Rangers. Once a NHL team sponsored a Junior team it gave them priority rights all the way down to the Pee Wees. The only exceptions on the Memorial Cup team were Paddy Ginnell as

he already belonged to another team system and Jean Gauthier who belonged to Montreal. Ted said, "I never thought about becoming a pro with the New York Rangers (just thought I'd go to college) till the last year of Junior hockey." However, Ted relates that the experience of winning gave him the confidence he needed to play with players at the same age level. So he chose hockey and was offered a scholarship with the University of Denver.

Ted's first year, 1957-58, he played for the Providence Rhode Island team in the AHL but he was very lonely. So, in 1958, he married Gail Lockhart in Flin Flon "and our hockey lives began", smiles Gail. In 1958-59 Ted played for the Vancouver Canucks and then in 1959-60 he went to the New York Rangers training camp at Springfield in the AHL where he was put on waivers and picked up by Toronto Maple Leafs to finish the season there. Then Ted was picked up again by the New Rangers for 1961 till 1964 and he finished on a farm team in Baltimore in 1964. He played a few games with the Detroit Red Wings and then for Pittsburgh for two years. In 1966 Ted said the highlight of his career was that he got to play with the Detroit Red Wings for two years and played on a line with Gordie Howe and Alex Delvecchio. Then, in the spring of 1968 he went to the Oakland Seals for three years and it was there that Ted won the Masterton Memorial Trophy for dedication and perseverance.



In 1971 he was playing for the Minnesota North Stars in the finals against the Montreal Canadiens. In the sixth game of the series Ted scored to tie the score just as the buzzer went to end the game... but it was ruled a 'no goal' and Montreal went on to win the Stanley Cup. That was as close as Ted got to the Cup! Then, in expansion again, the New York Islander claimed Ted but then the WHL has started up in Minnesota St. Paul, so Ted played for the Fighting Saints for four years, finishing in 1976 with the Quebec Nordics.

Then Ted took a good look at his family life, his three boys and Gail were happy in Minnesota and he decided to hang up the skates and go into the hockey equipment business and he also coached in Minnesota. Two years later he gave up the hockey equipment part of things and went coaching full time with the Oklahoma City Stars, a farm team of the Minnesota North Stars. He even played a few games which meant he, in his last pro game, was 42 years-old and had played pro hockey in the 50s - 60s - 70s - and 80s. Ted then decided that coaching wasn't all that it was cracked up to be

and he went into scouting. For two years he was with the NHL Central Scouting Bureau and then he was appointed Director of Amateur Scouting with the St. Louis Blues in 1983, and till today as their Assistant Coach, Vice President / Assistant General Manager and currently is the Director of Player Evaluation, "for at least two more years", he smiles. "What can I say! Hockey is my career!"

Gail and Ted have raised three sons Gordie (after Howe), Scott and Greg. They also have seven grandchildren. Their oldest grandson is going to Bismarck to play hockey.

The Hampsons have bought a permanent summer home at Denare Beach which they hope to use a lot in the off season. The Hampson family would "come home" to Flin Flon every summer once the hockey season was over till 1971. They said, "Once there were 14,000 people living here and it was like coming home to 14,000 friends!" And Ted hasn't quite hung up his skates. He played Saturday night, July 31, at the Whitney Forum on the revised Memorial Cup team in the Roller Goodwin Memorial Hockey Tournament along with Carl Forster, Cliff Lennartz, and others. And Ted scored on a penalty shot – he still has what it takes!

Gail and Ted enjoy coming "home" to Flin Flon and they are certainly welcome. What a wonderful couple and a great interview! Best wishes from all Flin Flon in your fantastic hockey career – STILL!

