



The Final Face-Off – 2021

T. Kent Morgan

During 2021, the hockey community lost many Manitobans as well as people with a connection to the sport in our province. Also included are earlier deaths not mentioned in The Final Face-Off in previous years or brought to our attention. Information has been compiled from newspaper obituaries and other sources such as the Internet and the Society for International Hockey Research (SIHR). Individual honoured members of the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame are noted with an asterisk* and the year of induction by MHHF or just the year. If a reader is aware of any deceased hockey people not listed, please email information to tkmorgan@mymts.net or call 1-204-489-6641.

Dec. 14, 2020 in Winnipeg, **Ron Bunio, 75** - A Winnipeg Jets Booster Club president, treasurer and long-time volunteer who served on the team's board of directors during the 1970s.

Jan. 9, 2021 in Winnipeg, **George Robertson, 93** - Scored the Memorial Cup winning goal for the Winnipeg Monarchs in the 1946 Canadian junior hockey championship. Pro career included time in the NHL with the Montreal Canadiens as well as in the AHL, PCHL and WHL. Spent five seasons with the senior Sydney Millionaires.

Jan. 21 in Winnipeg, ***Murray Balagus, 91** - Played for the 1957 Western Canada intermediate champion Pine Fall Paper Kings inducted into the HOF in 2011 and with the Winnipeg Maroons and Warroad Lakers between 1957-58 and 1967-68. MHHF1997.

Jan. 24 in Penticton, B.C., **Johnny Love, 90** - Member of the Dauphin Kings from 1949-50 to 1960-61. The 1950-1954 teams that won four provincial and two Western Canada intermediate championships were inducted into the HOF in 2017.

Jan. 30 in Fort Frances, ON, **Bennie Beck, 87** - Born in Makaroff MB, he played for the Fort Frances Canadians between 1954-55 and 1960-61.

Feb. 12 in Rochester, MN, **Maurice Chaput, 74** - Served as minor hockey president in St. Anne where his position as town operations manager led to involvement with the infrastructure of a new sports complex.

Feb. 13 in Harrison, AR, **Harry (Mutts) Miller, 99** - Fort Frances native who played for the junior Portage Terriers in 1940-41 followed by time in California with the Bakersfield Oilers, United States Army Flyers and the San Diego Skyhawks.

Feb. 16 in Deloraine, ***Don Dietrich, 59** - A captain of the junior Brandon Wheat Kings, his pro career between 1981-82 and 1990-91 included time in the NHL with the Chicago Black Hawks and New Jersey Devils plus in the AHL and Europe. Later coached and scouted in southwest Manitoba. MHHF2011 as a builder.

Feb, 17, **Emily Middaugh, 22** - In Winnipeg, she played high school for Kelvin, St. Mary's Academy, was captain of the Balmoral Hall Blazers, and in the Manitoba Junior Women's



League. She also played for the US division one St. Lawrence University and the University of Regina Cougars.

Feb. 21 in Gimli, **Roger Newman, 85** - A founder of the Midnite Flyers hockey group and an original member of Winnipeg media hockey group and the Sir John Franklin team in the Inner City Oldtimers League. A journalist, his stories in an Interlake newspaper helped the 1920 Olympic champion Winnipeg Falcons receive recognition at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

Feb. 26 in Steinbach, **Yves Lafreniere, 79** - Served as president of both the Hanover-Tache Hockey League and the Hanover-Tache Junior Hockey League and as president of the La Broquerie arena board.

Feb. 28 in Winnipeg, **Vi Comack, 93** - Vocalist for the WHA Winnipeg Jets as well as the Winnipeg Blue Bombers football club.

March 7 in Winnipeg, **Doug Smith, 78** - Played for the Winnipeg Monarchs of the MJHL from 1959-60 to 1962-63.

March 18 in Winnipeg, **Jack Zacharias, 82** - Played for the Winkler Royals and in a senior league in Benn, Switzerland. Last game was at age 81 with the Stonewall Oldtimers.

March 21 in B.C., **Cal Purinton, 78** - Regina native who played for the Flin Flon Bombers of the SJHL from 1959-60 to 1962-63 followed by 10 seasons in the IHL primarily with the Fort Wayne Komets.

March 25 in Winnipeg, **Tony Smaha, 82** - Served as president of the Inner City Oldtimers Hockey League and played for Lord Roberts.

March 26 in Portage la Prairie, **Don Blight, 91** - Played in Portage, Oakville, Minnedosa, and Penticton and was a member of the 1957 Poplar Point Memorials team that won the provincial A and AB intermediate championships and was inducted into the HOF in 2011. Father of the late HOF 1995 inducted member Rick Blight.

April 8 in Winnipeg, **Bob Crawford, 65** - Served on the Assiniboine Park Rangers hockey board.

April 11 in Calgary, **Jay Macaulay, 50** - Played for the Swift Current Broncos of the WHL in the late 1980s.

April 16 in Wayland, MA, **Johnny Pierson, 95** - Winnipeg-born forward who played for the Boston Bruins between 1946-47 and 1957-58.

April 26 in Winnipeg, **Glen Mikkelsen, 69** - Played for the Brandon Wheat Kings of the WHL in 1970-71 and 1971-72 and the next season in the EHL and IHL.

April 30 in Winnipeg, **Peter Cowie, 84** - Played at the University of Manitoba and with the Wildwood Oldtimers and Winnipeg Jest that included trips to Europe.



May 4 in Winnipeg, ***Jimmy Johnson, 70** - Junior for the Winnipeg Rangers from 1959-60 to 1961-62. Pro career until 1974-75 included time in the NHL with New York Rangers, Philadelphia Flyers and LA Kings and three seasons in the WHA. MHHF1993.

May 10 in Winnipeg, **Ted Fontaine, 79** - Played for the Sagkeeng Oldtimers.

May 10 in Winnipeg, **Ross Colcomb, 94** - Played with the St. James 55+ group at the Keith Bodley Arena into his Eighties.

May 24 in Winnipeg, **Larry Soldier, 65** - While living in Thompson, he was the manager of the Norman Northstars, played oldtimers and coached.

June 4, **Marlin Vanrobaeys, 65** - junior with the Winnipeg Monarchs and Selkirk Steelers of the MJHL and the Winnipeg Clubs of the WJHL. Steelers, who won the Centennial Cup in 1973-74, were inducted into the MHHF. Later played senior in the CASH League and for the Morden Bombers in the Southeastern League.

June 9 in Winnipeg, **Lloyd Rigby, 90** - Scout for the St. Boniface Canadiens in the 1950s.

June 11 in Pinawa, **Terry Halldorson, 61** - Had worked as a rink attendant for City of Winnipeg arenas and the Notre Dame Arena and played for the Glenwood oldtimers.

June 15 in Kitchener ON, **Howie Glover, 86** - His pro career primarily in the AHL and NHL included the 1957-58 season with the Winnipeg Warriors of the WHL.

June 21 in Vernon, B.C., **Odie Lowe, 93** - Played junior in Winnipeg for the Rangers and Canadiens and then for the Lethbridge Native Sons. Career included time with the New York Rovers, St. Paul Saints and three NHL games with the New York Rangers. Later spent many seasons in Vernon as a player winning the Allan Cup in 1955-56, and as a coach and referee.

June 26 in Raymond, IA, **Ray Mikulan, 87** - Goalie whose long career saw him with the junior Winnipeg Barons in 1953-54, the WHL Winnipeg Warriors between 1957-58 and 1959-60, and the next six years in the IHL.

June 26 in Winnipeg, **Delaney (Giesbrecht) Macaig, 42** - Timekeeper who once timed a pre-season game for the original Winnipeg Jets.

June 30 in Winnipeg, **Frank (Rocket) Humphreys, 96** - Coached minor hockey at Sir John Franklin and was an original member of the SJF teams in the Metro Oldtimers and Inner City Oldtimers leagues. Made two trips to Europe with the Winnipeg Buffaloes and played with several other groups including the St. James 55+ group until his Eighties. Once featured as The Other Rocket with a photo in a *Canadian Living* magazine article on Canadian hockey.

July 9 in Winnipeg, **Bob (Scotty) Wales, 82** - Played for the Winnipeg Braves of the MJHL in 1957-58 and the next season when the team won the Memorial Cup.

July 10 in Kelowna, B.C., **Ron Hutchinson, 84** - After three seasons with the hometown Flin Flon Bombers winning the Memorial Cup in 1957 played pro for 10 years mostly in the WHL. Had



nine games in the NHL with the New York Rangers. Later played senior for the Cranbrook Royals.

July 19 in Melita, ***Allan (Butch) Lee, 91** – Spent 28 seasons with the intermediate Pierson Bruins as a player and coach. Won seven Southwest League MVP awards and was an 18-time league all-star. MHHF1989.

July 22 in Winnipeg, **Ted (Dutch) Holland, 83** - Associate editor of *The Hockey Spectator Canada* in the early 1970s. Served on the MHHF board and selection committee and co-edited the newsletter. Among the many teams or groups he played for were the Fort Garry Flyers. Royal Bank and media.

July 20 in Winnipeg, **Donn Kirton, 87** - Radio broadcaster who was the arena announcer for the original Winnipeg Jets.

Aug. 1 In Winnipeg, **Jim Palmer, 89** - Multi-sport athlete who sharpened skates in St. James for 33 years and coached young hockey.

Aug 8 in Flin Flon, **Harvey Fleming, 84** - Played for the Flin Flon Bombers from 1954-55 to 1956-57 when the team won the Memorial Cup. Later played in the EHL and IHL and with the senior Red Deer Rockets.

Aug. 8 in Winnipeg, ***Gerry Varnes, 91** - Long-time official at all levels in Manitoba who was inducted into the MHHF in 2015. Also served as registrar of the Greater Winnipeg Minor Hockey Association.

Aug. 26 in Winnipeg, **Alain Girard, 60** - Played in Portage la Prairie and then coached in Gimli, with various Winnipeg AAA and AA teams, and the junior B Lunder Falcons.

Aug. 31 in Winnipeg, **Jack Ruppert, 96** - Coached, managed and volunteered in AAA.

Sept. 1 in Carman, **Menno Friesen, 83** - Played for the Elm Creek Seals and Peguis Oldtimers and coached the Elm Creek bantams.

Sept. 21 in Winnipeg, **Sid White, 88** - Defenseman with the Winnipeg juvenile Canadiens in 1948-49 and 1949-50 when the team won the provincial championship. Three years of junior including 1952- 53 when the St. Boniface Canadiens (MHHF2009) lost in the Memorial Cup final. Later played a season in the IHL, two with the senior Nelson Maple Leafs, and in the Big 6 League for the Minnedosa Jets.

Sept. 22 in Eugene, OR, **Gordon (Rock) Kerr, 98** - Played for the junior St. James Canadiens and Winnipeg Esquires between 1940-41 and 1942-43. Was a high-scoring centre in the PCHL and the WHL with Seattle, Portland, Tacoma and Vancouver for nine seasons after World War II.

Sept. 27 in Charlotte, NC, **Jim Lane, 76** - Regina-born defenseman who played junior for the Melville Millionaires of the SJHL and the Winnipeg Rangers of the MJHL. After playing in the EHL, he became an official in the league.



Oct. 7 in Winnipeg, **Ray Charambura, 92** - Multi-sport athlete, coach and administrator who served as president of the Canadian Central Hockey League in the mid-1970s and played goal for the Winnipeg Brookers and the Manitoba Oldtimers.

Oct. 7 in Winnipeg, **Bodhan Schurko** - Volunteered as a convener for the Winnipeg Minor Hockey Association.

Oct. 10 in Winnipeg, **Carl Porteous, 87** - Played for the Winnipeg Black Hawks and Barons of the MJHL from 1951-52 to 1953-54 followed by one season in the EHL.

Oct. 13 in Kelowna, **Ed (Zeke) Zakala, 86** - All-star defenseman with the 1953-54 provincial juvenile champion Winnipeg Monarchs and junior for the Monarchs in 1954-55 and 1955-56.

Oct. 15 in Midland, ON, **Jim Wilcox, 80** - Ontario defenseman who came West to play for the Brandon Wheat Kings of the MJHL in 1960-61. Later had a lengthy pro career.

Oct. 19 in Winnipeg, **Ralph (Red) Magnusson, 90** - Coached for many years in Gimli from the bantam level to the junior Wolves.

Oct. 30 in Winnipeg, **Patricia Perry, 91** - Was crowned Miss Ice Hockey 1951 in England where she met her husband John from Winnipeg who was playing for the Wembley Lions.

Nov. 2 in Winnipeg, **Joe Bryksa, 55** - Winnipeg Free Press photographer whose work included the Winnipeg Jets and the Winter Olympics in Calgary.

Nov. 3 in Vancouver, **Barry Ross, 82** - Born in Cloverleaf, he played for the Winnipeg Monarchs of the MJHL from 1957-58 to 1959-60. Later helped start the Beausejour Beavers team. After retiring from the RCMP, he played oldtimers in B.C. for the Schooners and Ol'Blues.

Nov. 12 in Ashern, **Ernie Johnson, 85** - Refereed in Lynn Lake and later in Ashern until the age of 70.

Nov. 13 in Southern Pines, NC, **Bill (Rocket) Reichart, 86** - MJHL Winnipeg Black Hawks and Barons 1949-50 to 1952-53. Two-time All-American at the University of North Dakota and played in the IHL and senior in Alberta and Minnesota with the Rochester Mustangs. Captain of the 1964 US Olympic team.

Nov. 18 in Warren, **Gary Tait, 71** - Played for the Warren Mercurys and coached boys' teams in the area.

Nov. 19 in Winnipeg, **Barry Paulsen, 82** - Served as a board member of the Dauphin Kings hockey club and as manager of the midget Kings.

Dec. 6 in Winnipeg, **Rick Williams, 77** - Coached in North Kildonan and Transcona for three decades.

Dec. 8 in Winnipeg, **Michael (Mickey) Kaiser, 85** - Played for the Winnipeg Monarchs juvenile champions in 1953-54, the juvenile and junior Monarchs in 1955-56, and the provincial champion junior team in 1956-57.



Dec. 11 in St. Catharines, **Neil Barker, 64** - Played for the U of M Bisons and in the Winnipeg Police League. Coached minor hockey in Winnipeg and played and instructed in the Niagara Region.

Dec. 12 in Fort Wayne, IN, ***Len Thornson, 88** - Junior career included leading the St. Boniface Canadiens in scoring in 1952-53 when the team lost in the Memorial Cup final. Voted the greatest player in IHL history by *The Hockey News*. Won seven MVP awards and three scoring titles with the Fort Wayne Komets. MHHF1993.

Dec. 12 in Winnipeg, **Len Morrow, 85** - Played for the provincial juvenile champion Winnipeg Monarchs in 1952-53 and 53-54 followed by two junior seasons with the Prince Albert Mintos of the SJHL and the Monarchs of the MJHL.

Dec. 19 in Irving, TX. ***Curt Ridley, 70** - Goalie with the Portage Terriers of the MJHL in 1969-70 and 70-71 followed by an 11-year pro career where he played in the NHL with The New York Rangers, Toronto Maple Leafs and Vancouver Canucks plus in the AHL and CHL. MHHF 2015.

Dec. 24 in Germany, ***Mike Daski, 92** - Played for the Black Hawks in the MJHL in 1947-48 and 48-49. Had a lengthy playing career in England, Switzerland and Germany where he coached for years. Inducted into the German Hockey Hall of Fame. MHHF2001.

Dec. 25 In Dauphin, **Cecil (Bunny) Small, 82** - Goalie who played for several Dauphin Kings teams.

Dec. 31 near Alexander, **Stacy Pratt, 56** - Played for the Brandon Wheat Kings of the WHL between 1980-81 and 1983-84.