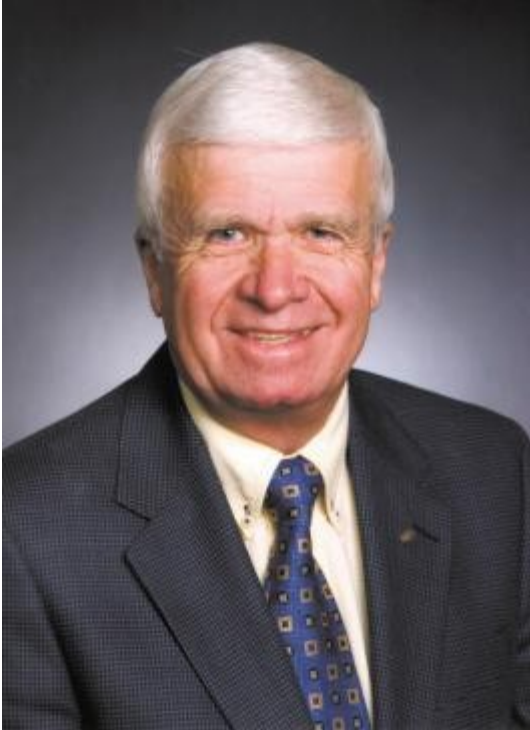


Riverview's Peter Hanson has spent years living, breathing and promoting hockey

By Tom Biggs

Times & Transcript Staff

He swears he's never sworn at any player while they were exciting the ice surface at the Moncton Coliseum. And you've got to take him at his word.



Peter Hanson

Peter Hanson of Riverview has been hollering at opposing players ever since the Coliseum was built in 1977.

You see, Hanson has had season tickets and sat in the same seats in Section 11 for all those years. He's watched both the American Hockey League and Quebec Major Junior Hockey League teams in this city and is renowned for his boisterous but controlled behaviour as a fan near the penalty box and exit for visiting teams.

Yelling at opposing players, trying to get under their skin, is just Hanson's way of having some fun and enjoying Canada's game.

But the 69-year-old Hanson also has a serious side. He's tried over the years to make sure that everyone that wants to can play hockey despite their particular financial situation.

For this and many other reasons, Hanson will receive the Order of Merit Award from Hockey Canada this weekend in Quebec City. He'll be one of three from across Canada to receive the honour.

The award is in "recognition of the invaluable contributions made to Canada's national winter game." It's being presented during Hockey Canada's annual general meeting.

"I'm honoured and extremely pleased," Hanson said upon hearing the news. "It's kind of a surprise but it's always nice to be recognized."

However, Hanson is quick to point out that he's had a lot of help of the years.

"People like Charlie Kennedy in Lewisville and our 15-man league executive have always been

helpful," Hanson said. "Every association needs a strong backup and these behind the scenes guys could always be counted on."

Hanson, inducted into the Moncton Wall of Fame in 2005, has been president of the 40-team N.B. Central Midget Hockey League for the past 38 years. Kennedy has been the vice-president for all but a couple of those years. He understands it's the longest-running amateur hockey league anywhere in Canada.

This year's midget league banquet at the Dundee SportsDome attracted 1,200 young players from around the province. Hanson believes that group attended the largest hockey banquet in New Brunswick history.

The Central Midget League provides players a good competitive atmosphere. It's for players after house league and just below the AAA level.

Among the celebrities guests that attended the Central Midget League banquets over the years were Guy Lafleur, Gordie Howe, Bobby Orr and Howie Meeker.

Hanson also has refereed over 3,500 minor hockey games, and he's proud to say that he's never charged a dime for his services. He had to stop referring about three years ago after his left ankle was broken by a slapshot. He spent four days in hospital.

During the past four decades, Hanson has been involved in various aspects of hockey in the city and received many honours.

Besides his induction into the Moncton Wall of Fame and this weekend's Order of merit Award, Hanson received the Vance Toner Development Award (2005), the J. Charles Daigle Award (1992) and the Paul Harris Fellowship Award from Rotary International (1987).

He's was also chairman of Kinsmen Minor Hockey from 1967-70, coached and managed hockey teams in Riverview (1976-1985) and was a member of the organizing committee for the Canadian Wrigley midget hockey tournament in 1977.

During that Wrigley tournament in '77, Hanson was an ambassador for the eventual champion Don Mills Flyers of Ontario. The team then went to tournaments in the Czech Republic and the Soviet Union and invited Hanson to come along with them for the 23-day tour.

During that trip, Hanson said he witnessed one of the greatest games he's ever seen.

Down 5-1 to the Red Army team in the third period, the Don Mills club stormed back to tie the game 5-5 and went ahead 6-5 on goal by eventual NHLer Larry Murphy with about two minutes left in the game.

The referee then called two straight elbowing penalties to Don Mills and the club was able to hold onto the win despite the obvious bias of the Soviet referee.

For this weekend's festivities in Quebec City, Hanson will be joined by his wife Carol and one his two sons, 37-year-old Kevin of Vancouver. His other son, 34-year-old Colin, is a banker in the Cayman Islands.