

## **Appendix D: Nomination Package for Jimmy MacNeil**

### **Nominee's Name:**

Jimmy MacNeil

### **In what way has the nominee brought local, regional, provincial or national recognition to the City of Brantford?**

Jimmy was selected and named 1999 Zamboni Driver of the Year for the Pre-Olympic Goodyear Drive for Gold Tour in 2001-2002 driving a Zamboni on a 6,000 km tour across the Country from Newfoundland to British Columbia stopping in 79 cities along the way. Jimmy went up against thousands of other Zamboni drivers and even Hollywood celebs who drove a Zamboni in movies.

In 2001, Jimmy was accompanied partway with our Lord Mayor Walter Gretzky who got behind Jimmy's bid for fame and soon it seemed like the entire country knew his name. In 2004, Jimmy's story was featured on a Tim Horton's cup!

Thousands of people rode the Zamboni with him, helping reach a fundraising goal of 1 million for the Canadian Hockey Association. During each stop people paid \$20.02 for a one-kilometre ride with Jimmy which was especially fitted with extra seats.

In December 2017, Jimmy published the heartwarming book "The Red and White Zamboni Ice Machine" about his adventures on his cross-country tour. Jimmy's dream was to inspire the next generation and share the joy he found in ice making. Jimmy's dream was for his book to reach even great heights, much like his coast to coast to coast journey. Jimmy shared his adventures of a lifetime and with many students at several schools.

### **Please describe nominee's biographical information and his or her connection to the City and its historic or contemporary development (i.e. the nominee was born here, lived here during a formative time in their career, etc.)**

In 1963, Jimmy's Dad, Alex MacNeil became the first Zamboni mechanic in Canada. Jimmy always said "I grew up with Zambonis always around on our family farm, " I had six sisters and a brother and we all worked for my Dad fixing Zambonis at one time or another." Jimmy's original plan when he graduated from Laurier in 1984 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in history to teach. In 1989, Jimmy decided to venture out and become a Zamboni driver at a local arena (and continued assisting his Father with maintenance of

Zambonis), St. George Arena, where he worked till 1991. At this time, Jimmy then moved onward, closer to home, to the Brantford Civic Centre and later, the Wayne Gretzky Arena, where he retired from in 2018.

Jimmy was born in the County of Brant and for more than 30 years Jimmy was employed by the City of Brantford as a dedicated rink operator driving Zambonis at various City arenas. His contributions to the ice and the community were immeasurable, as he perfected ice surfaces for people of all ages, from young Timbits players to seasoned veterans. He always had a perma smile on his face when he would see you and always took the time to chat and give you that good feel.

### **Why is it important to recognize the nominee as part of Prominence Point? What is exceptional about this individual's contribution to the City of Brantford?**

Jimmy was an incredible Ambassador for the City of Brantford, going to schools, reading to students and cooking at children's Breakfast clubs.

Jimmy campaigned to raise funds for the Diabetes Association as he dealt with his struggles with the same disease.

Jimmy and his wife Lori, rescued and cared for many injured and abandoned animals, always helping wildlife.

Jimmy also, volunteered with the Caledonia Corvairs. His son, Jake said "when the excitement was all over, Jimmy went back to the rink where it all started and never lost sight of the impact one person could make in a community."

Sadly, Jimmy passed on October 15th, 2023. Jimmy leaves behind his wife of 34 years, Lori, his children, Jenna, Jordan, Jake and his fur babies. Jimmy left us with a legacy of dedication and love for his work, which has touched the lives of countless individuals in the City of Brantford and all over our Country. The love for his family, our community, country and his indomitable, dedication and spirit will forever be remembered.

Jimmy truly made a difference and his favourite saying was "they say you get 15 minutes of fame, but I tell people I got three periods and this is overtime!".

### **Name of Nominator**

Josie Mannen

### **Additional Material**

Figure 1: Image of Nominee provided by Nominator.

