



GANANOQUE HONOURS A FAVOURITE SON

with the Gord Brown Memorial Canada 150 Outdoor Rink

By Lorraine Payette

The Brown family has long been respected in Gananoque, and none more so than Gord Brown, MP for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, who represented them in the House of Commons of Canada as a member of the Conservative Party from 2004 until his death on May 2, 2018, in Ottawa. A true man of the people, he would not only talk to anyone who approached him, but would listen carefully and take them and their needs seriously. He was well respected not only in his riding, but throughout Parliament by all members from all parties and did everything he could to advance the causes near and dear to the hearts of all Canadians, especially those he represented.

One of the things he truly wanted to give to his town and its residents was a quality outdoor ice rink that could be used and enjoyed by everyone in the area. He jumped

at the chance when the Canada 150 Outdoor Rink became available, and put his heart and soul into bringing it to Gananoque.

On November 20 the Town received shipment of the eagerly awaited rink. Delivery was greeted by members of Brown's family and young players on the Pee wee Islanders, as well as representatives from the Town of Gananoque and 1,000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce.

"The Canada 150 Rink was originally installed on the southeast lawn of Parliament Hill as part of the Canada 150 celebrations," said Adam McCluskey, Manager of Parks and Recreation for the Corporation of the Town of Gananoque. "Once the skating season concluded, the partnership between the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ottawa International Hockey Festival announced that the rink would be

donated and asked municipalities to apply. Through the hard work of the late MP Gord Brown, generous contributions, and a lot of staff and volunteer hours, the Town of Gananoque was successful in winning the bid and receiving the rink."

The rink is to be installed near the existing Lou Jeffries Arena, and will bear the name of the late MP Gord Brown, who was on the committee that was working to bring the rink to Gananoque. An avid hockey player and fan of the game, MP Brown was a resident of Gananoque who had served on Council, and over his career he also served as president of the chamber of commerce, chaired the St. Lawrence Parks Commission and was an involved local businessman, as well as spending his time volunteering in the local area.

"Council endorsed naming of the rink after Gord Brown to honour his legacy and

Facing Page: Can't wait to get it up and going – the rink that was eagerly awaited has now been delivered to the local storage site in Gananoque as of November 20, and will soon be installed near the Lou Jeffries Recreation Centre.

L-r, (on left) Jeff Brown (local businessman and Gord's brother), Nolan McCargar (PeeWee Islanders), Courtney Small (Jeff Brown's wife), and Chance Brown (son to the late MP Gord Brown);

L-r, (on right) Jordan Kirkland (PeeWee Islanders), Adam McCluskey (Parks and Recreation), Logan Swiech (PeeWee Islanders), and Amy Kirkland, (1,000 Islands Gananoque Chamber of Commerce).

A Go Fund Me page was set up shortly after Mr. Brown's passing to raise money for the ice pad vision and to date over \$38,000 of a \$100,000 goal has been raised.
<https://ca.gofundme.com/help-gord-browns-gan-ice-pad-vision>



Top Left & Middle: Piece by piece, the rink was unloaded and moved to the local storage site in Gananoque.

Top Right: A small crowd of hockey enthusiasts made up of Chance and Jeff Brown and some members of the PeeWee Islanders watched the pieces of the rink being unloaded at the local storage site in Gananoque.

Far Left: The late MP Gord Brown at his annual fundraiser Hockey Night in Leeds-Grenville back in 2012.

Left: Members of the PeeWee Islanders chat with Chance Brown, son of the late MP Gord Brown, as parts of the Gord Brown Memorial Canada 150 Outdoor Rink are delivered to the local storage site in Gananoque on November 20.

the many contributions he made to the community," said McCluskey.

The rink is expected to take a few months of design followed by a few months of physical work before it is ready for use. However, the Town is hoping to have it up and running in time for some summer programming. At this time they are considering activities such as ball hockey, pickleball, basketball and other sports appropriate to such a space.

"As his son I feel proud, grateful and appreciative that the town of Gananoque thinks that highly of my Dad," said Chance Brown, Gord's elder son. "It shows me that people respected him and thought of a meaningful and personal way to remember him. It would have genuine meaning for him. Dad would feel honoured, proud and surprised to have a rink named after him. He would see it as a major compliment."

"Once weather permits, there is a plan of hosting a special hockey game to be the

first major event, with more details to come on this at a future date," said McCluskey. "The community has embraced both the bid to get the 150 rink and are now supporting efforts to raise funds to complete future phases of this project."

The Brown family itself is contributing to that fundraising by donating half of this year's proceeds from the annual Hockey Night in Leeds and Grenville to the project. This \$40,000 is a nice boost and will help the committee with its goal of raising \$850,000 for the rink.

"I hope the rink is used by everyone and it brings people of all ages together," said Brown. "My Dad was really big on community and I hope it gives people a sense of community. I hope people think about their families when they come to skate. I know that many people will remember my Dad as a Member of Parliament and business man, but I also

hope they associate him with skating, hockey and fun. Hockey was his favourite thing.

"I am looking forward to skating on it with my Uncle Jeff and cousins Colin, Sean, Graeme and Cole. I hope we can have an annual memorial community game or hockey tournament on my Dad's behalf – something special just for him. I will feel proud to see his name on it, but will also feel sad that he never got to skate on it himself."

It is believed that by having two ice pads in such close proximity to each other, the town will be able to attract a wider range of tournaments and activities. Public skating will be more readily available while allowing the full schedule of hockey games and practices to continue uninterrupted.

"This is a wonderful addition to the Town's amenities – residents will be able to enjoy this marquee outdoor skating rink for years to come," said McCluskey. **LH**