

Keith G. Hollands (1926- 1983)

Keith was born in Sydney, BC, moved east to attend Rutgers University, New Jersey, for his Masters Degree, secured a job as a research scientist with Agriculture Canada and finally moved to Ottawa in the early 1950's

In the late 1950's the RA Centre opened in Ottawa and Keith became a member of the fledgling RA Badminton Club, He was by no means a talented serious competitive player. Although Keith passionately loved the game, his skill level kept him at what is usually termed a "recreational" level.

What Keith lacked in playing ability was more than made up for in his dedication to the administrative side of the game, starting with his duties on the RA Badminton Club executive (1960-1967) where his organizational talents and enthusiasm were quickly recognized. From the RA he moved on to the Ottawa & District Badminton Association (ODBA), where he made a tremendous impact on the development of clubs in the Ottawa area (1968-1983). He also served, on two occasions, on the Ontario Badminton Association (OBA) Executive holding the portfolio of Secretary at the time of his death. For numerous years, Keith was a Director of Badminton Canada, chairing several committees.

At each of these levels Keith made a significant impact and contribution. At the start of his tenure as President of ODBA in 1969, there were eight affiliated clubs in the OBDA and at the conclusion of his term the club level had risen to an all time high of 24 affiliated clubs. This feat was accomplished by many hours of personal attendances at clubs in Ottawa and throughout the valley selling the values of the club affiliating with organized badminton. Perhaps one of his finest contributions locally was the concept of a Badminton Jamboree, to get as many people as possible playing badminton on one day in Ottawa, followed by a dinner/dance. On that day, six gymnasias were used with an average of 50 players per gym. It was a feat not since repeated. Along with good friend David Waddell, the concept of a summer tournament (combined play and fun events such as swimming) took shape in the late 1970's and the first Ottawa Summer Festival was held. Keith also served on many of the committees put in place by ODBA for International Badminton Exhibition matches, Thomas Cup ties (Mexico and Peru), the Canadian Closed Championships in 1975 and 1980 and the Canadian Masters in 1982. Keith was also selected to be one of the Co-Chairs for exhibition matches by the first Chinese players to come to Canada after the opening of relationships with China undertaken by Pierre Trudeau. This meant endless hours of patient negotiations with the Chinese Embassy delegation in Ottawa to bring off a successful visit.

During his tenure as OBA Secretary in the early 1980's Keith worked on the concept that the OBA should be encouraging players to participate at levels appropriate to their needs, interests and abilities and that the OBA should be serving all its members. This version worked into an OBA mission statement that was adopted and maintained until 1997 when the focus of the OBA was changed. Keith endeavored to make us all look at the diverse levels of ability within the badminton community and to try our best to service all members of OBA.

His contributions to Badminton Canada came, not really as an influential member of the Executive, but as a behind-the-scenes, dedicated volunteer. He worked with the then Executive Director David Folinsbee, to bring to fruition the first National Training Centre at Ottawa University (1978). This not only meant that the paperwork involved, but the physical labour

required in getting a house ready for the athletes, constructing “light boxes” for on-court training, “baby-sitting” athletes who were at the centre and away from home for the first time and, finally, trying to familiarize an Indonesian coach to a Canadian lifestyle and an Ottawa winter. Keith was also the first Chairman of the then newly formed Recreation Committee of Badminton Canada, set up its structure, mission statement and initial programs, one of which, the National Test Program, evolved into the Skills and Award program and publication of the first coaching manuals.

In 1977 Keith was honoured by the Province of Ontario with its Special Achievement Award for volunteer contribution to sport, and in 1978, was awarded the H.I. Evans Memorial Award from Badminton Canada for his volunteer contribution to that organization.

Following his death in 1983, the O.B.A. Board of Directors instituted two different awards to honour his memory and the contributions that he made to badminton. One was the establishment of an annual award to be given to a volunteer in Ontario who has contributed significantly to badminton in the Province within that year, the award being known as the Keith Hollands Volunteer Award. The second recognition was the establishment of the Keith Hollands Endowment, the purpose of which is to provide seed money for worthwhile badminton projects in Ontario with a recreational level bias. Projects assisted by the endowment over the last several years have included: promotional badminton posters, Badminton Enrichment clinics for grade school children, and pre-OFSAA tournaments for high school athletes.

Outside badminton he was involved in other activities. In 1973, as President of O.D.B.A., Keith became involved with the National Capital Region Amateur Sports Council. He served as Vice-President, President and Past President of this regional umbrella sports organization. He was also a member of the Byng Fishing Club and was an avid outdoors man enjoying canoeing trips through Algonquin Park for many years.

In conclusion, Keith was a well respected member of the badminton community. His willingness to listen and discuss and to comprehend and analyze issues was held in high esteem by his peers.