**Volleyball PEI Inducts Lynn Boudreau & Phil O’Neill into it’s Hall of Fame in 2020**

Two people synonymous with the sport of volleyball in Prince Edward Island have received the highest honour possible from the provincial association. Lynn (Heaney) Boudreau of Elmwood and Phil O’Neill of Charlottetown are the 2020 inductees into the Volleyball P.E.I. Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony was part of the Volleyball P.E.I. Awards Gala at Credit Union Place in Summerside recently. “I am just flattered, I really am,” said O’Neill. “I am honoured and grateful. “I have been a volleyball nut my whole life.” Boudreau, who is proud to be the first woman to go into the Volleyball P.E.I. Hall of Fame, said she was humbled with the honour. “Those who know me well, know I like being the one celebrating everybody else,” said Boudreau, who was inducted under the player category. “It’s kind of weird being the one talked about. I am super excited.” Boudreau was thrilled to be able to share the experience with some individuals who had a big influence on her development as a player. “Sue Seaborn, my coach from university, is here, (high school coach) John Bowness is here and they surprised me and Stephanie Gould, my best friend and teammate is here,” said a proud Boudreau. “It’s pretty cool.” Boudreau and O’Neill’s volleyball careers have both followed similar paths. They both built impressive resumés playing before turning their attention to coaching and administration.

**LYNN BOUDREAU**

Boudreau began playing volleyball in Grade 9. “I played through high school, but basketball was still my No. 1 love,” she said. “It wasn’t until Grade 12 when I was like, ‘I think volleyball is the sport for me.’ “I was fortunate enough I went off and played for Sue at Mount Allison, which was the right choice.” It was at Mount A that Boudreau became a dominant force, earning both school and conference awards. The highlight, she noted, was winning the 1989-90 Atlantic university championship. "Now that Mount A is in the college (league) and not the university (league), it will be the only (university) banner they will win unless at some point they change leagues again,” said Boudreau. “That was pretty special. "That was an exceptional group. From that group, I am still in contact with seven of those girls regularly. Some of them now coach or they have children the same age of what I am coaching.” Boudreau acknowledged she would never have played at the university level had it not been for her coaches, Garth Campbell and John Bowness, at Kensington Intermediate Senior High School (KISH). “I have to start with Mr. Campbell because he was patient enough to take me on the (intermediate) team and I wasn’t very good,” said a smiling Boudreau, who is married to Bluefield High School athletic director Darryl Boudreau. “I didn’t start playing until I was in Grade 9 and I sat on the bench most of the time.” In senior volleyball, Boudreau played under Bowness, who guided KISH to 16 P.E.I. School Athletic Association senior AAA girls’ titles. “John just drove us to be

better,” said Boudreau. “He took us everywhere and he wasn’t afraid to take us to big tournaments. “We went to a tournament out in Edmonton when I was in Grade 10 and there were eight women’s teams and eight men’s teams from across the country that got to go to that tournament. It was phenomenal. “He exposed us to a different level of volleyball, which made us believe anything was possible.” Today, Boudreau’s passion is doing the same thing for the province’s up-andcoming players. She has been coaching for 28 years and her resumé includes junior high, high school, Canada Games and university. She has also coached and played beach volleyball. “I don’t see that stopping right now,” said Boudreau, who added one of the high

lights of her coaching career was the opportunity to coach her twin sons, Andre and Lucas Boudreau, at the junior and senior high levels. “I didn’t plan to coach high school when they played, but I did and it was lots of fun,” said Boudreau. “I want to see more Island kids make it to the next level.”

**PHIL O’NEILL**

It’s safe to say volleyball helped pave the way for the rest of O’Neill’s life, on and off the court. “When I was training for the first Canada Games in 1967, I met my wife (Janet),” explained O’Neill. “She was training for the P.E.I. Canada Games’ gymnastics team. We began dating after the Games and we were married 49 years ago. She has been with me every step of the way.” O’Neill, who has been involved with volleyball for the

last 50 years, played for P.E.I. in men’s volleyball at the 1967 Canada Games in Quebec City and coached the team in Saskatchewan in 1971. Both events provided special memories. “It was February in Quebec City during the Quebec Winter Carnival (in 1967),” said O’Neill. “I remember our walk-out dress was green blazers. Every other province was outfitted with jackets and parkas. “We were standing in

-20-degree weather wearing these green blazers and proud as can be.” In 1971, O’Neill recalled a match against host Saskatchewan before a packed gymnasium. “We split the match as the matches were two games,” said O’Neill. “At that time, it was a complete round-robin (format), there were 12 teams, so you played 11 matches over the week. Volleyball has been a wonderful, wonderful experience for me.” O’Neill, who was inducted as a builder, said one of his most satisfying contributions to volleyball was co-chairing the Cavendish Beach volleyball tournament with Danny Grant for 26 years. He proudly noted there were as many as 22 courts at one time and more than 100 teams. “When I initially got involved with the Cavendish Beach Volley administration, we had a group of 12 volunteers that were excellent,” said O’Neill. “They were probably the best team I had ever participated with. “There was almost no turnover for 26 years and they all knew what their jobs were and could make that tournament run smoothly. There were some challenges, not the least of which was the weather.” O’Neill has coached both boys and girls for the past 30 years. In retirement, he has coached at East Wiltshire Intermediate School. “My granddaughter (Jenna O’Neill) plays volleyball and I began coaching at the junior high level when she was in Grade 7,” said O’Neill. “She has moved onto Bluefield and I like the junior high level and it brings a lot of satisfaction.” The constant action attracted O’Neill to the sport. “In volleyball, we are not allowed to hold onto the ball. We must redirect it. When volleyball is played poorly, it is really ugly. When volleyball is played well, I find it just intriguing and fantastic. People can control the ball, control where it's going without physically holding onto the ball."