



34TH ANNUAL SPORT VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER



Hamilton



The Office of
MAYOR ANDREA HORWATH
CITY OF HAMILTON

April 29th, 2025

On behalf of the City of Hamilton, I am pleased to welcome you to the 34th Annual Sport Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. We are thrilled to gather here once again to celebrate the exceptional contributions of the volunteers who make sport in our community thrive.

Tonight is all about you – the athletes, coaches, and volunteers who dedicate your time, energy, and passion to shaping the future of youth sport in Hamilton. Your selfless service and tireless commitment are the heartbeat of our athletic programs, and we are here to honour and recognize the lasting impact you have made.



This evening, we will celebrate the excellence of individuals nominated by their peers for their outstanding contributions to sport development. Whether on the field, in the community, or behind the scenes, your efforts are shaping the lives of countless young athletes.

Thank you for everything you do. Let's make tonight a memorable celebration of your passion and hard work!

Yours Sincerely,

Andrea Horwath
Mayor



Hamilton



Office of the General Manager
Healthy and Safe Communities Department
28 James St. N., 5th Floor
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K1

April 2025

Dear Invaluable City of Hamilton Volunteers,

Welcome to the 34th annual Sport Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

Thank you for joining us tonight!

It is my privilege to be able to recognize the contributions and efforts of the sport volunteers in our community. Coaches, officials, administrators and game day volunteers are the foundation of amateur sports. Without you, sport in our great city would not be thriving the way it is.

Sport and active living is key to building healthy lives and vibrant communities. I am grateful for the passion shown by all of you as volunteers to create positive and rewarding experiences for those whose paths you cross. Each of you have been instrumental in making Hamilton the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

This evening is to celebrate you and I sincerely hope you have a wonderful time.

Sincerely,

Grace Mater
General Manager
Healthy and Safe Communities



On behalf of the SportHamilton Board of Directors, it is my honour to welcome all the sport volunteers and special guests to the **34th Annual Sport Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.**

SportHamilton has been a working partner with the City of Hamilton, Healthy and Safe Communities- Recreation Division since the inception of these prestigious awards back in 1986. These awards recognize and celebrate the long-standing volunteer contribution and outstanding achievements of so many Hamilton community individuals in sport.

We are proud of all the distinguished award recipients and other special award recipients recognized this evening. Congratulations on this well-deserved honour. You all have made a significant difference in the lives of so many. Your leadership, knowledge and generosity have greatly contributed to the success of the many diverse sport programs offered throughout the community and you are much appreciated. Sport and recreation programs are available due to the commitment of the incredible volunteers in our city.

All sport and recreation programs strive to provide a quality experience for all those who choose to participate. In addition, these groups strive to develop excellence in sport and movement skills while building each individual's confidence to motivate them to continue to participate in sport, develop personal fitness, health and wellness all the while having fun and building friendships. Thank you to the volunteers who make this happen.

Thanks to the SportHamilton volunteer Board of Directors for their dedication and commitment:

Dan Cialini, Bernard DuBois, Kevin Duffy, Anthony Frisina, Jim Galvin, Lisa Henry, Michael McCarthy, Eric McLoughlin, Dr. Andrew Peters, Alexandra Petermann, Dave Rashford, Val Sarjeant, Dave Strecker, Maria Suriani, Elizabeth Trabucco, Ed Valentenbergs.

Special thanks to City of Hamilton Recreation Department liaison Michael Savoy and all the staff and administration for their ongoing support and assistance.

Sincerely Yours in Sport,

Helen Downey
President SportHamilton

www.sporthamilton.com

SPORT SERVICES TEAM & EVENT COMMITTEE

The Sport Services team is proud to work alongside our dedicated sport organizations, striving to foster growth, development, and excellence in local athletics. Through collaboration and shared goals, we are able to enhance the experience for athletes and support the success of our programs. Together, we're building stronger, more vibrant sports communities.

Sport Services Team:

Manager Sport Services: Karly Brush
Sport Specialists: Gordon Young,
Mackenzie Copeland, Mike Savoy
Sport Event Specialist: Ron Scott

Sport Volunteer Event Committee:

Ron Scott, Gordon Young, Mike Savoy,
Kelly Jones, Mandy Dhaliwal, Tim Alblas
and Kevin Button

PARTNERS



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GREETINGS

Welcome by
Mike Fortune – Emcee

Greetings from:

Mayor Andrea Horwath Mayor of the City of Hamilton

Grace Mater General Manager of Healthy & Safe Communities

Helen Downey President, SportHamilton

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT & NATIONAL ANTHEM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Simoni Lawrence former Hamilton Tiger-Cat and CFL Ambassador

HAMILTON HERO BANNER INDUCTION

AWARDS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

City of Hamilton Distinguished Youth Sport Volunteer **Awards**

Ray Lewis Community Service **Award**

Dr. Gene Sutton Club Excellence **Award**

Dr. Ray Johnson Coach of the Year **Award**

Ron Foxcroft Fair Play **Award**

Distinguished Sport Volunteer **Awards**

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



KEY NOTE SPEAKER

SIMONI LAWRENCE

Simoni Lawrence, a force to be reckoned with, arguably the best player to have ever worn a Hamilton Tiger-Cats jersey. He attended Valley Forge Military Academy where he was ranked one of the top Junior College players in the nation and graduated a Lieutenant and Mustang Scholar earning a full scholarship to the University of Minnesota where he was named the most outstanding first year player, team captain, and All Big Ten. With Hamilton Tiger-Cats, Simoni Lawrence has a series of All-Star nominations (2014-2016, 2019, 2021) to his name, he's more than simply a player; he's an icon.

Lawrence earns respect as team captain, and his dominance extends beyond simple awards, with many exceptional defensive awards (2014, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023) firmly establishing his role as a defensive powerhouse. He is also great in the community, as he received a community award by the Mayor of Hamilton naming February 21st as Simoni Lawrence day in the city of Hamilton. He also sits on the Board of Directors for Food4kids, where he has raised over thousands of dollars for children in Hamilton with food insecurity.

After a successful football career, he transitioned into the business world, where he now leads at Hamilton Sports Group. There, he drives the growth of both the Hamilton Sports Group brand and a variety of partner brands. In addition, he is actively mentoring and delivering keynote speeches on leadership, mental health, and resilience.



2025 HAMILTON HERO BANNER INDUCTEE

BILL FRIDAY

Bill Friday is a retired Canadian ice hockey referee. A Hamilton native, Bill Friday is the only hockey referee to ever work the Stanley Cup finals in the National Hockey League and the Avco Cup finals in the World Hockey Association.

Friday started his officiating career in the NHL, and moved to the WHA in 1972. Known for his flamboyant style Friday was a whistleblower in 1,425 games in both leagues. A former Junior B and minor hockey league player for Hamilton Aerovox, Friday worked as an on-ice official in the Ontario Hockey Association from 1955 to 1959. He joined the NHL staff the following year and worked games there until 1972. That's when the WHL lured him to join upstart league.

Friday worked the very first WHA game in 1973 and officiated the very last game the league played in 1979. He was appointed the WHA referee-in-chief in 1976. His jump to the WHA is credited with raising NHL officials' salaries. He was also a founder and first president of the NHL Officials Association.

In 2010, Friday was an inaugural inductee into the Hamilton Sports Hall of Fame. In 2012, Friday was elected to the World Hockey Association Hall of Fame. In 2017, Lawfield Arena in Hamilton was renamed Bill Friday Lawfield Arena for his contributions to the area where his children played youth sports. Bill Friday passed away in 2024.

PAST HAMILTON HERO BANNER INDUCTEES

Dave Andreychuk	Joanne Malar
David Braley	Bev Mallory
Barb Bunkowsky	Irene McDonald
Dr. John Byl	*Audrey (Dearnly) McLaughlan
Cecelia Carter-Smith	Steve Mitruk
Al Craig	Al Morrow
Bobby Croft	Angelo Mosca
Bernie Custis	Murray Oliver
Sheila Dezeeuw	Sue Palmer-Komar
Gordon Dickson	Jack Pelech
Ryan Ellis	Russ Prior
Ron Foxcroft	Therese Quigley
Chelsea Gotell	Pat Quinn
David Hart	Kimberly Ribble-Orr
Frank Hayden	M.M. Robinson
Geraldine Heaney	Vinnie Ryan
Garney Henley	Paula Schnurr
*Violet (Smith) Hinstead	Billy Scherring
Harry Howell	Glen Sonmor
Cindy Ishoy	*Betty (White) Stanley
Russ Jackson	Dr. Gene Sutton
Dr. Ray Johnson	Melissa Tancredi
Don Knight	Leslie Taylor
Bob Krouse	Jimmy Thompson
Mel LaForme	Joe Young
George Larson	
"Rapid Ray" Lewis	

MAJOR AWARD WINNERS

2025

YOUTH SPORT VOLUNTEER AWARD

2025 Recipient –

Dalton Therrien and Jamie Gardner

This award is presented to a youth who is heavily involved in volunteering, coaching, officiating or organizing sporting opportunities in Hamilton. This individual displays good sportsmanship, promotes fair play, encourages participation, provides a fun experience for all and represents the Hamilton community with integrity and pride.



Dalton
Therrien



Jamie
Gardner



RAY LEWIS ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

2025 Recipient – Mitchell Kawasaki

Presented in the adult category to an outstanding Hamilton athlete who has excelled in sport and has also made a significant contribution to the Hamilton community. Rapid Ray Lewis was a Canadian track and field star in the 1930's, born and raised in Hamilton. He was an Order of Canada recipient in 2001 and passed away in 2003. Ray was a role model and mentor to many students and young athletes throughout his life in sport and his teachings in the Hamilton school system.

DR. GENE SUTTON CLUB EXCELLENCE AWARD

2025 Recipient – Saltfleet Stoney Creek Soccer

The Dr. Gene Sutton Club Excellence Award was established by the City of Hamilton in 2010 to recognize a model sports or recreation organization that provides quality youth programming, promotes healthy living, exemplifies respect for sport and fair play, and is a role model for youth in the Hamilton community. The award is named after Dr. Gene Sutton who was dedicated to quality amateur sport in Hamilton. Dr. Sutton was an advocate for providing a safe, healthy, and fun environment for youth in sport and encouraged sportsmanship and fair play.





Dr. RAY JOHNSON COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD

2025 Recipient – Kru Alin Halmagean

Presented to an individual who best exemplifies the attributes that contribute to quality coaching. Dr. Ray Johnson was an integral part of the Hamilton community. He dedicated many years to sport as a coach and a builder. He advocated for those in need and provided opportunities for many residents in the City of Hamilton. A selfless man who gave so much to the community.



RON FOXCROFT FAIR PLAY AWARD

2025 Recipient – Samara Sevor

Presented to an official who has demonstrated tremendous dedication to the principles of fair play and played a leadership role in the development of sport officials. Beginning as a basketball referee at McMaster University, Ron Foxcroft went on to an impressive career as the NCAA's only Canadian basketball referee and officiated international basketball games in more than 30 countries, including the gold medal basketball game in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. He was the only Canadian appointee to the National Association of Sports Officials board in the USA. Ron is known as much for his affection for sport and his entrepreneurial success as he is for his own athletic achievements and his desire to help youth.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

2025 Recipient – John Valvasori

Presented to an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment as an active volunteer in amateur sport over an extended period of time; may be a previous winner of a distinguished sport volunteer award.

DISTINGUISHED SPORT VOLUNTEER AWARDS

2025 Recipients listed below

Presented to individuals nominated for a minimum of a 10-year contribution to sport in the community; can only win once; nominees are screened for

Angela Beaulieu
Sport Hamilton

Jennifer Beaulieu
Sport Hamilton

Howard Brain
Hamilton District
Baseball Association

Randy Chapple
Gourley Park Baseball

Frank Clappa
Stoney Creek Athletics

Megan Connolly
Hamilton Sparta Soccer Club

Racheal Deneault
Hamilton Challenger Sports

Bernard Dubois
Sport Hamilton

Mark Fonovic
Mount Hamilton Youth
Soccer Club

**Golden Horseshoe
Cycling Club**
Accepted by Neal Marcynuk

Ellen Hickey
Hamilton Women's Hockey

Scott Hunt
Hamilton Aquatic Club

Sue Mackenzie
Rosedale Minor Hockey

Denise McArthur
Hamilton Challenger Sports

Mount Hamilton Youth Soccer
Accepted by Carl Horton

Craig Powers
Dundas Lawn Bowling club

Teresa Radke
Flamboro Skating Club

Jeff Reynolds
Chedoke Minor Hockey

Nick Roller
Carlisle Tennis Club

Sharlene Saunders
Hamilton Women's Hockey

Mariessa Startek
Hamilton Skating Club

Patrick Turgeon
Flamborough Dundas
Soccer Club

Bill Young
Hamilton Senior
Pickleball Association

City Enrichment Fund

The City of Hamilton invests in community organizations and professional artist projects through the City Enrichment Fund

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Agriculture



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Communities,
Culture &
Heritage



Community
Services



Digital



Environment



Sport &
Active
Lifestyles

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2025 for projects
taking place
in 2026!**