

The SONJA CURRIE JACOBSON MEMORIAL AWARD for Outstanding Achievement

No challenge was too great for Sonja Currie Jacobson, from excellent student who became Canadian Junior Champion at the age of 13 to an excellent teacher who nurtured future champions and those who just liked to skate, Sonja made the transition effortlessly.

Every skater was important to Sonja; however, "it was her capacity to take on the competitive and non-competitive students that was so special," says Marg Calder, close friend and former President of the Lethbridge Figure Skating Club. "There was a joy in seeing someone struggling and succeeding. You need the realism that you get with the kids who are struggling."

Yvonne Sonja Jacobsen died tragically with her two youngest children, Jill & Ronald, when fire swept through their home on November 21, 1981. At that time, she was the Senior Figure Skating Professional of the Lethbridge Figure Skating Club. She is survived by her husband, Ronald Jacobson, and her eldest son, John Currie Jacobson.

Sonja, who passed her preliminary figure at age five, completed her Canadian Gold Medal by her twelfth birthday and earned her American Gold Medal a short time later. At the age of fourteen, she was the Silver Medalist in Senior Canadians.

Sonja was a qualified CFSA (Skate Canada) Judge and in 1956 she went to the World Figure Skating Championships in Oslo, Norway as a member of the Canadian team. Although she was a member of Canada's Olympic team, injuries prevented her from participating. As a result of injuries, Sonja turned professional in 1958. Later that year, she married Ronald Alan Jacobson and skated under the name of "Sonja Currie Jacobson."

Sonja and her mother, Peggy Currie, along with a group of skating enthusiasts, reactivated the Lethbridge Figure Skating Club in 1959. Sonja taught at the club, taking time to have her three children until her passing. "She was an excellent coach," recalls Maureen Hitman Calder, a former colleague. "Sonja wasn't afraid to share her students. She believed in teamwork. If there were other Coaches who could help her students, she wasn't afraid to send them elsewhere knowing full well they would come back. She saw to what was best for her students."

Former student Jennifer Tait agrees. "She took a personal interest in each of the students. She was a fantastic teacher. The students had a lot of respect for her."

The Sonja Currie Jacobsen Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement is designed to honor a competitive skater of the Club who has brought high standards of excellence, honour, glory and distinction to the individual as well as to the Club through successful achievement in high competitions and tests.

Criteria:

1. The Sonja Currie Jacobson Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement, symbolized by a trophy and a replica, shall be awarded, if justified possible, to a Competitive Club skater. It shall not be automatically made annually.
2. Criteria in selection of eligible candidates shall include:
 - A competitive skater in the highest or "A" category level who represents the ideals of high standards of performance, service and excellence in all levels of skating, including competitiveness and good sportsmanship. The skater, who, as a result of participation in International & Skate Canada approved tests & competitions, will have realized outstanding success and achievement. These criteria, however, shall not preclude lower level competitive skaters from being eligible if they meet these same high standards and ideals.
 - Successful achievement and advancement in International and Skate Canada competition in the skaters' division and progression through International & Skate Canada tests.
 - Merit and outstanding achievement worthy of recognition
 - Regard may also be had to the standards established by Sonja and her known wishes on behalf of the Club and its skaters. The recipient shall be named by the Club on the selection made by the Advisory Committee. Complete criteria may be obtained from the Lethbridge Figure Skating Club Executive. The recipient shall be publicly recognized at the annual Club Carnival or other significant Club event.