

## Sad News

### **Dave Pitts – August 22, 2025**

Jonathan Pitts, Dave's son sent this release about his dad.

David Pitts, passed away this morning in Buenos Aires, Argentina, due to complications from Alzheimer's. He was 89.



He is survived by Jonathan Pitts (his son from his first marriage), Marissa Polizzotto (his daughter from his second marriage, to former Ice Capade chorus line skater Anita Polizzotto), and Tiffany Gom (his daughter from his third marriage to Betty). Melanie Polizzotto, his daughter from his second marriage passed away in 1990.

Through Tiffany, David also has a surviving grandson and a grand-daughter. Through his deceased older brother, Richard Pitts, David also was an uncle to two nieces, Tracy Pitts and Gail Johnson, and one nephew, Scott Pitts. He was a grand-uncle to Mikayla Johnson and Steven Johnson.

Through his work with Ice Capades, David had 4 chimpanzees, all deceased.

### **Steve Thistle - August 10, 2025**

Tina Noyes submitted this information about Steve Thistle's passing on Aug. 10, 2025

I am sending to you this sad news about an Alumni of our Ice Capades Family. Mr. Stephen Thistle fondly called "Miss Kitty" by his friends skated in the West Company of **Ice Capades**. He passed away peacefully on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025 in Houston, Texas. His interment will be a Memorial Mass in Providence, Rhode Island at a future date. Private ceremony, family only.

I believe his performing dates in the Corps de ballet was 1968-1971. He loved performing in the West Company and shared many exciting stories of the Opening Night Galas, wonderful Halloween parties and especially his fond memories of all his dear friends to everyone he met. Steve always referred his years with Ice Capades as an honor to be a member of THE GRESTEST ICE SHOW ON EARTH.

## Sonya Klopfer Dunfield – August 7, 2025



Sonya Klopfer Dunfield, a U.S. champion, two-time World medalist and Olympian in the early 1950s, passed away Aug. 7, 2025. She was 90.

After the 1952 World Championships, Sonya enjoyed a ice show skating career with **Ice Capades**, Holiday on Ice and finally, the Roxy Theatre in New York.

From there, she married Peter Dunfield of Canada and they went on to have a brilliant coaching career together in the U.S. and Canada, with students who included Dorothy Hamill, Elizabeth Manley, Charlene Wong, Yuka Sato and Scott Smith.

Sonya once told SKATING magazine, “I want to help everybody learn to skate and love to skate. That’s my biggest joy — to see somebody do something they thought they couldn’t do and come out with a smile.”

She was inducted into the United States Figure Skating Hall of Fame in 2009 in Cleveland.

An in-person memorial in Sun Valley, Idaho, is being planned for Sept. 20, with the possibility of live video option, according to the couple’s sons, Gregory and Roger Dunfield.

“She [Sonya] was a force of nature in sport, who touched the lives of so many with her spirit, guidance and strength,” her sons posted on social media. “She will be deeply missed and forever remembered.”

## Lynn Benson – August 7, 2025

(aka in Ice Capades – AJ Reynolds)



Lynn Marie Benson, of Salem and North Conway, New Hampshire, formerly of Lexington, Massachusetts, passed peacefully on August 7, 2025, after battling Alzheimer’s disease with the determination, strength, and poise that she carried throughout all aspects of her life.

The devoted wife of Charles A. Benson and loving mother, Lynn balanced the exacting demands of a U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame coaching career with family life, achieving a rare harmony in which neither was diminished by the other. Her polished style and refined demeanor were matched—unexpectedly—by a fearless dare-devil spirit. On vacations, she sought out skydiving, bungee jumping, roller coasters and hot air balloon adventures,

often leaving her husband, Chuck, to cheer her on from solid ground. The two first met during a snow storm on the way to a ski trip, sparking a family passion for skiing now shared by her grandchildren.

Despite her love of skating, Lynn never imposed the sport on her children; instead, she instilled its deeper elements of discipline, commitment, and perseverance while encouraging them to forge their own paths. She celebrated their achievements devoid of any ego tied to her own successes—making it easy for them to forget that, amid school drop-offs, family dinners, and extracurriculars, she was a world-class coach. Lynn’s professional strive for excellence was balanced by a deep care for her family, delivered with a grace that made her an anchor of strength and inspiration.



Professionally, Lynn was a pioneering force in figure skating, earning her the title "Mother of Synchronized Skating" and induction into the U.S. Figure Skating Hall of Fame. Her career began as a Nationals singles competitor representing the Skating Club of Boston, followed by a stint performing in the **Ice Capades**—a path she chose over college, much to her parents' dismay. This foundation propelled her into a 32-year coaching career in Lexington, Massachusetts, where she founded the Haydenettes Synchronized Skating Teams, giving countless athletes opportunities to pursue their dreams. Lynn believed deeply in her athletes' potential, expecting exceptional hard work to unlock their individual talents while fostering a team ethos. Under her leadership, the Haydenettes captured 15 U.S. Synchronized Championship gold medals between 1988 and 2005, and consistently finished in the top-five at the ISU World Synchronized Skating Championships. In 2003, she became the first synchronized skating coach named Coach of the Year by both U.S. Figure Skating and the Professional Skaters Association. A fierce competitor who cared profoundly for her athletes, Lynn's innovative leadership and modest demeanor left an indelible and positive impact on the figure skating community.

Lynn is survived by her husband Chuck Benson; her daughter, Courtney Hayden (Jon); her son, Andrew Benson, (Kristen Cahill); her cherished grandchildren, Tyler, Brandon, Blaire, Travis, and Xander; and countless friends, colleagues and former athletes who were touched by her grace, determination, and enduring legacy.

Calling hours will be held on Monday, September 8 at the Douglass Funeral Home, 51 Worthen Rd., Lexington, MA from 4pm – 7 pm. A memorial mass will be held on Tuesday, September 9 at 11 am at Sacred Heart Church, 16 Follen Rd., Lexington, MA with a celebration to follow. Relatives and friends are kindly invited.

In lieu of flowers, consider donating to an organization dear to her heart since she was a child, U.S. Figure Skating ([www.usfigureskating.org/support/donate](http://www.usfigureskating.org/support/donate)) or the Cure Alzheimer's Fund ([give.curealz.org](http://give.curealz.org)).

<https://www.douglassfh.com/obituary/lynn-benson>

Click here for article in US Figure Skating –  
<https://www.usfigureskating.org/news/article/coaching-great-lynn-benson-passes-away>

# Back to the beginning....

## **Ice revues and hotel shows had huge impact in 30s and 40s**



A story about the beginnings of the Ice Follies and **Ice Capades** appears on page 10 of the February 2021 issue of SKATING magazine. Here are some more fun facts about those traveling ice shows and others.

**Editor's note:** A story about the beginnings of the Ice Follies and Ice Capades appears on page 10 of the February issue of SKATING magazine. Here are some more fun facts about those traveling ice shows and others.

Compiled by Ryan Stevens

- Touring professional ice revues were in their heyday. In 1940, **Ice Capades** had its world premiere in New Orleans and Arthur M. Wirtz joined forces to present the Hollywood Ice Revue and a series of successful shows at the Centre Theatre in New York. In 1945, Holiday on Ice got its start. Ice Follies, established by Eddie and Roy Shipstad and Oscar Johnson in the 1930s, was already hugely popular. These tours brought figure skating to American cities big and small, as well as exotic locations that had never seen skating before: Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and The Middle East. In Jordan, skaters performed in an ancient amphitheater where gladiators and lions once entertained the Romans.
- Sonja Henie's 20th-Century Fox films were box-office hits around the world. As Hollywood bigwigs took notice of the Norwegian skating queen's success on the silver screen, other film studios realized the big screen appeal of figure skating. British Olympian Belita Jepson-Turner's skating performances in the 1946 Monogram Pictures film noir "Suspense" became cult classics. In Nigeria, the locals were convinced that the performer's skates were a form of magic.



Swiss-born Frick and Frack came to the United States in 1937 and joined the original Ice Follies show as comedy ice skaters.

- Hotel and nightclub ice shows were also huge during wartime — the Hotel New Yorker and St. Regis Hotel in New York City, Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, Sir Francis Drake in San Francisco, Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Adolphus Hotel in Dallas. If you didn't mind having ice sprayed on you when a skater did a quick stop on a tiny tank, you could watch skaters do Salchows while you had a steak dinner and a glass of wine.
- One of the stars of the Hotel New Yorker's show, Adele Inge of St. Louis was one of the first women to do a backflip on the ice.
- In the 1950s, Tom Arnold and Claude Langdon's ice pantomimes in England drew in record audiences. These shows starred the likes of Belita, Gloria Nord and Jacqueline du Bief and featured comedians, adagio acts, live music and skaters lip-syncing to voice-over actors.





Belita Jepson-Turner brought skating to the silver screen in the 1940s in films like *Silver Skates*, *Suspense*, *The Hunted* and *Lady Let's Dance*. (Photo courtesy the Skate Guard Archive)

<https://www.usfigureskating.org/news/article/ice-revues-and-hotel-shows-had-huge-impact-30s-and-40s>

## On the Road with Jerry Lee Kidd



Here is another great “On the Road with Jerry Lee Kidd” story. The year is 1988 and I just made the drive from my home in NC to Duluth MN, 1198 miles, to begin costume fittings and rehearsals for *Return to Romance*. I am checking into the wonderful Olde Worlde Inn not the greatest hotel but home for the next 6 weeks. To my surprise and horror, they give the room outlined in blue, no elevator so have to lug that heavy luggage up all those stairs. For one of the rare times, I am single. On my way up the stairs, I am already dreading the dingy gloomy room that awaits me. But upon opening the door it was like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, the room is freshly painted, new carpet, new furniture, new Murphy Bed,

refurbished bathroom and kitchen. I don't know what I did to deserve this but was sure happy I got it. Maybe a week into my stay, I was in the room when the maid came, must have been on a Sunday, she asked me how I liked the room and if I had any strange happenings since being there? Me being curious I asked her why she would ask that question. She said "well with what went on in here I just wondered". She had me, so I made her tell me the story of the new room. Seems that the room had previously been occupied by a long time resident who had fallen on hard times and had turned to drugs and alcohol, he was way behind on his rent and saw no way out so he took the easy way out. She said he was sitting on the bed when he blew his brains out, now it becomes very clear as to why everything was new. This had only happened like a month before I got there. Well, I never did experience any strange happenings, down deep I really hoped I would. But made it through the stay and left without any problem. Oh yeah forgot to say that the view was spectacular, could see all of downtown and across the lake as far as the eye could see. The light show during those electric storms we had there over the lake was really something to behold.

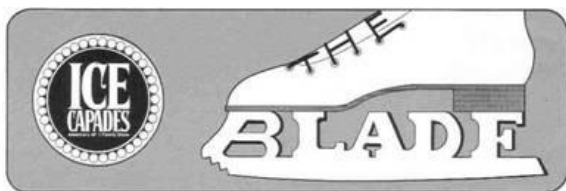
# Relive a Video from the past

Hurray for Hollywood – 1989 - With Rita Moreno



[https://youtu.be/3TQoEpMeSFw?si=P4IKun19y\\_NES69j](https://youtu.be/3TQoEpMeSFw?si=P4IKun19y_NES69j)

Honolulu back stage, end of 1976-77 tour, principals.



The website, [www.icecapadestheblade.com](http://www.icecapadestheblade.com) has been revamped and more information has been added. If you have something to add, please send them.

Look here for **2025 Ice Capades Reunion** information, including reunion pictures

**Cast, Precision & Production Pictures** – Relive some memories.

**Past reunion Pictures** – Check them out for some you may have missed.

**Rosters** – Looking for someone or remembering who you skated with in the show?

**Video links** – have been collecting skating 'You Tube' links from the early years.

**Program Covers** – we had the most beautiful covers

**Past Issues of The Blade** – just in case you missed an issue  
**Past Reunion Pictures** – relive the times you attended the reunions  
**In Memorium** – remembering those who have left us too soon  
Check it out!

## Upcoming Events



**Ice Theatre of New York, Inc<sup>®</sup>**  
**presents**

<https://www.icetheatre.org/>

Ticket and information at [icetheatre.org/tickets](https://www.icetheatre.org/tickets)

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