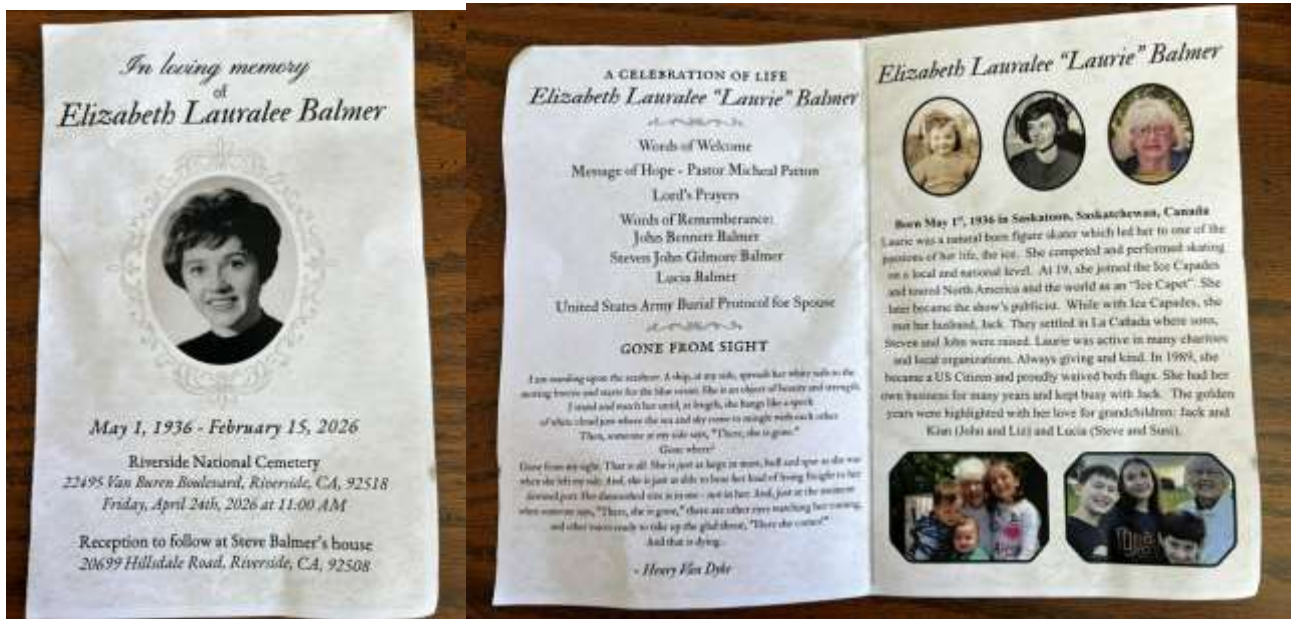


## Sad News

Laurie Balmer – Feb. 15, 2026



# Our Alumni in the News

Two-time Emmy Award winner and Skate Canada Hall of Fame choreographer **Sarah Kawahara** has shaped stories on ice across competitive skating, film, television and live shows. From 'I, Tonya' to working with legends like Kurt Browning and Toller Cranston, her work is rooted in bringing out each skater's individuality.



## Sarah Kawahara and the Art of Ice Choreography

During decades of work in competitive skating, film, television and ice shows, [Sarah Kawahara](#), a choreographer inducted into Skate Canada's Hall of Fame, has built her career on a guiding principle: an excellent choreography is to make the skater shine.

Whether she works with Olympic champions, Hollywood actors or artists from around the world, she uses the movement to showcase the individuality of each skater.

Her career began in competitive skating, before she joined the **Ice Capades** at the age of 18, where she discovered her passion for bringing characters on the ice to life. This experience shaped her artistic voice and opened the doors to a new universe of creative expression.



## Making the skaters shine

For Sarah, choreography is a matter of collaboration, not control.


"I think to be a good choreographer, you can't just impose your vision on someone," she explained. "If you want to succeed, it's not about putting yourself – even in value, but about making skaters shine. »

Working with elite skaters such as Peggy Fleming, Kurt Browning, Toller Cranston and Scott Hamilton, she learned that no two athletes move or express themselves in the same way. Each has a unique way of moving, which requires a different creative approach. Throughout her career, she has taken up the challenge of adapting her unique choreography to different body types and energy levels.

These days, she draws on these experiences as artistic director at Willy Bietak Productions, where she creates large-scale ice shows for cruise lines. Working with skaters with diverse cultural and artistic backgrounds continues to shape their perspective.

"We all have joint skating... that's what brings us together," she said.

For Sarah, the most striking performances are produced when skaters have the ability to express their personality and call on their creativity. Taking into account the identity and lived experience of each artist, she creates works that demonstrate authenticity.

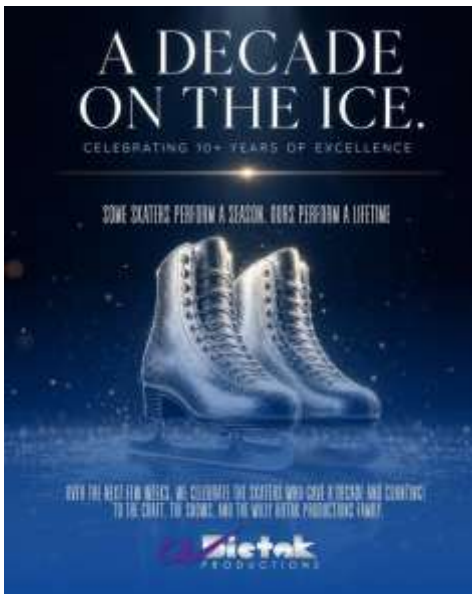
Read more about her creative philosophy and how she transforms movement into storytelling on the ice   
<https://bit.ly/4dpYtOv>

Take a look at Tim Estiloz's – new media website - <https://timestiloz.com/>



Tim Estiloz is a two-time Emmy award winning television and online journalist and content creator with over 20 years of experience in the news and entertainment broadcast industry. His diverse television reporting and hosting experience includes working for NBC network daytime programming, E! Entertainment Television, Comcast, HGTV, PBS and various Boston / New England area television news operations. Tim has New England area television news operations. Tim has interviewed and profiled many of Hollywood's top Oscar-winning film and television actors and music stars. He is a member of the Boston Society of Film Critics; and also a voting member of the Critics Choice Association which is responsible for the annual televised Critics Choice Awards.

## Bietak Productions



🌟 A Decade on the Ice. Countless Moments. One Family. 🌟

Some skaters take the ice and leave an impression.

Others take the ice and never leave.

This month, we're doing something truly special. 🏆

Over the coming weeks, we're pulling back the curtain to celebrate the extraordinary men and women who have been part of the Willy Bietak Productions family for 10+ years. These are the athletes who showed up — contract after contract, ship after ship, city after city and poured their hearts into every performance.

We're talking about

👉 The dedication that keeps blades sharp and spirits sharper

🌍 The travels! Ports, countries, and stages they've graced around the world

🏆 The milestones, the memories, and the moments that define a career

🌟 Fun facts and stories only a decade of on-ice storytelling can write

These skaters aren't just cast members. They are the soul of these shows.

Stay tuned! [#DecadeOnIce](https://www.instagram.com/DecadeOnIce) starts now. Tag a skater you know deserves to be celebrated! 

## Video of the Month

Who might remember seeing this?

To Tell the Truth - Peggy Fleming, Olympic skater; (Apr 25, 1966)

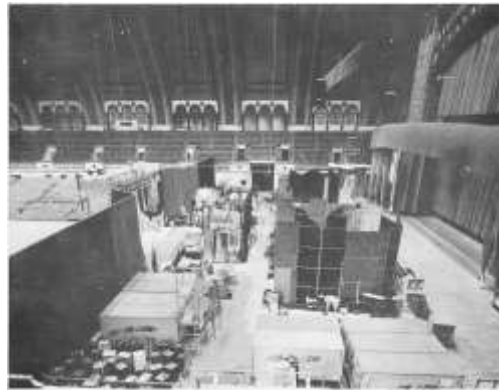


[https://youtu.be/U\\_6iL4ztavM?si=w63Q0dVaDeXGfoo](https://youtu.be/U_6iL4ztavM?si=w63Q0dVaDeXGfoo)

## Memories

What are your memories of Atlantic City.....





Backstage set up



Were you one of the 'lucky ones' who were put up at the Mark Hotel when you first arrived? I remember it was \$2 a night and think we got out of there as quickly as possible and headed over to the Pageant Motel. Those who stayed there will understand why we got out.



...

Who can forget our favorite watering holes

# Upcoming Events



CELEBRATING THE JOY  
OF DANCING ON ICE

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)



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!

If you know if someone who would like to receive The Blade, please send me their email address or if you would like to be removed from receiving The Blade, please type 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

Email me directly at [gspoden@rogers.com](mailto:gspoden@rogers.com)