

Sad News

Charley Gray – Nov. 7, 2025



Charles Thomas Gray, 73, of Beaverton, OR died of cancer on November 7, 2025.

Charles (Charley) was born in San Rafael, CA in 1952 to Thomas and Vivian Gray. When Charley saw the Buddy Rich Big Band Machine play in San Francisco as a teenager, he immediately knew that he wanted to be part of that world. What followed was a life rich in passion for music playing, writing, and arranging. While attending San Rafael High School, Charley enjoyed playing timpani in the Marin Symphony Youth Orchestra. He went on to attend Foothill College and then San Francisco State University, where he graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1974. Charley taught music in Marin County, all the while enjoying playing bass in a variety of groups. Reflecting on those gigs played and friends made brought him a comforting, nostalgic joy.

Beginning in 1980, Charley toured with the **Ice Capades as the conductor**, an adventure he cherished that allowed him to grow as a musician while making lifelong friends and exploring new places with his wife. After 6 years on the road, Charley attended North Texas State University, where he played in the Two O'Clock Band and earned a Master of Music degree in Jazz Composition in 1988.

Later that year, Charley was hired as Portland State University's Director of Jazz Studies where he built the program from the ground up, created the jazz studies bachelor's degree, co-created the jazz studies master's degree, and became a deeply committed mentor to every one of his students. During his years at PSU, Charley co-founded the Portland Jazz Orchestra for which he continued to write, arrange and conduct, traveled to Portland's sister city in Russia with a jazz ensemble, and was awarded the title of "Portland Jazz Master" in 2015. After 27 incredible years, Charley retired from PSU in 2015.

While Charley's calling was playing, writing, and arranging music, his greatest joy was his family. He never came home from a Tony and Tina's Wedding gig without cake for his wife and daughter, he brought his daughter into the orchestra pit of The Singing Christmas Tree on multiple occasions, and one of his proudest memories was playing Hello Dolly on guitar with his daughter on clarinet.

Outside of music, Charley enjoyed backpacking, tennis, and running (including 3 marathons). Later on, his days were happily filled with golf, reading, and traveling (mostly to the Oregon coast, with some amazing international trips in between). Charley's most beloved hobby, and the one that will likely be most missed, was cooking and baking for his friends and family. While it will never be quite the same, Charley's daughter is well on her way to perfecting his eggs benedict and lemon meringue pie.

Charley was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Susan Gray Mason, and is survived by his wife, Cathy, and their daughter Christine Parker (Gregory).

To celebrate the richness Charley brought to the Portland music community and beyond, family and friends will gather for a memorial concert in his honor to be held on Sunday, March 22 at 12:30 pm at The Old Church in Portland. For those wishing to honor Charley's legacy, the Gray family invites memorial contributions to the Charley Gray Jazz Award at Portland State University, which supports student musicians at PSU. Donations may be made by emailing give@psuf.org or by mailing a check payable to PSU Foundation (please note "Charley Gray Jazz Award" in the memo line) to PSU Foundation, P.O. Box 243, Portland, OR 97207-0243.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#).
Published by The Oregonian from Feb. 4 to Feb. 8, 2026.

Patricia Doherty – March 20, 2026



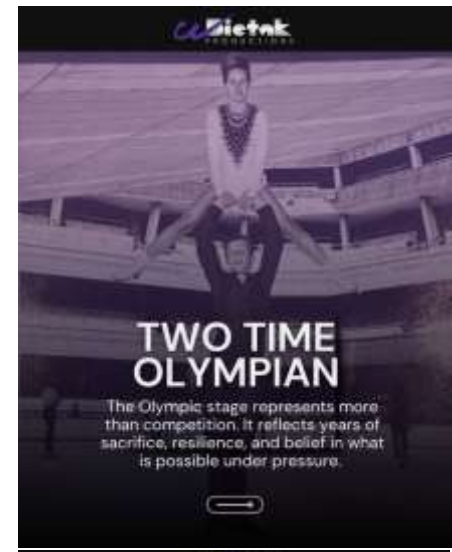
Patricia "Pat" Brannigan Doherty, 98, passed away peacefully on March 20, 2026, at Masonic Village at Sewickley. A proud daughter of Mt. Washington, she lived there for 75 years before moving to Sewickley. She is survived by her son, Michael; daughter-in-law, Jody; and her cherished grandson, Robert. She also leaves behind beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins across the country. She was predeceased by her husband and great love, Maurice "Hibby" Hibschan; her parents, Robert and Grace Brannigan; her brothers, Bob and Bern Brannigan and Jack Hannan; and her sister, Florence Marsh. After World War II, Pat performed as an overseas USO entertainer, then returned to Pittsburgh to work in wardrobe alongside other members of the Brannigan clan at the Nixon Theatre and at the inaugural season of the Pittsburgh

Civic Light Opera. She later toured as a **wardrobe supervisor** for Gypsy and **the Ice Capades**, was a 70+ year member of IATSE Wardrobe Local 787, served as a box office treasurer, was an international representative for the IA, and later worked as a Pittsburgh building inspector. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Pat was a steadfast presence in her community: a fish-fry stalwart at Epiphany, a surrogate mother for her stranded CMU drama kids, and an accomplished maker of meatloaf, lettuce soup, and chocolate chip cookies. Her smile could warm a room before she even spoke, and she had an uncanny way of making everyone family, friends, or strangers feel like they were the center of her world. While those who loved her feel deep sadness at her passing, there is great joy in knowing she is reunited with her beloved Hibby no doubt boarding heaven's QE II together. There will be no visitation. A funeral Mass was celebrated at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, March 26, 2026, at St. James Church, Divine Redeemer Parish, 200 Walnut St., [Sewickley, PA 15143](#) (www.divine-redeemer.org). In Pat's memory, donations may be made to: Sisters of Divine Providence Mission Advancement, 9000 Babcock Blvd., Allison Park, PA 15101, www.cdpsisters.org. Arrangements by TATALOVICH FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATION SERVICES INC., 2205 McMinn St., Aliquippa, PA 15001.

Our Alumni in the News

**From champion athlete to entertainment pioneer,
Willy Bietak's legacy continues to inspire the next generation.**

Willy Bietak's journey is a reminder that greatness on the ice is built step by step: through discipline, vision, and a love for the sport that never stops evolving. Hall of Fame careers are built by skaters who out-work, out-learn, and out-last. Willy Bietak's path, from nine-time Austrian champion and two-time Olympian to ice-show pioneer, proves that your impact on this sport can extend far beyond your competitive peak. If you're training like a pro, start thinking like a future architect of the ice too.



Modern Technology takes over

[Terry Wilkie](#) -

I asked ChatGPT to write a story about what it was like to start with **Ice Capades** doing lighting in 1978. Here's what it came up with, and honestly, not far off:

Back in 1978, when I first stepped into the world of lighting with **Ice Capades**, everything felt bigger than life—and at the same time, simpler than anything you'd see today.

There were no moving lights. No digital consoles. No presets waiting quietly in memory. What we had were Par cans, Lekos, dimmers that hummed like they had a personality of their own, and a whole lot of instinct.

The arena would still be waking up when we rolled in—cold air, the faint smell of ice, and that echo you only get in an empty rink. You could hear your boots on the concrete and the occasional scrape of skates as someone tested the surface. Then came the lighting gear—heavy, real, built like it meant something. No plastic housings or touchscreens. Just metal, cables, clamps, and sweat.

We'd start hanging Pars—big, honest fixtures that didn't pretend to be anything fancy. You pointed them where you needed light, and that was it. No pan/tilt motors. If it needed adjusting, you climbed up and did it yourself. Same with the Lekos—those were your precision tools. You'd shutter them in by hand, shape the beam just right, maybe drop in a gel that had seen better days but still gave you the color you needed.

Everything was manual. Everything.

Focusing a show wasn't about programming—it was about being there. You'd stand on the ice or in the seats, calling up to the catwalk:

"Bring that down a little... no, left... hold it—there!"

And someone up above would tweak the fixture inch by inch until it felt right. Not measured in data—measured by eye.

The dimmer racks had their own soundtrack—a low electrical buzz that meant the show was alive even before the audience walked in. When you brought up a look, you *felt* it. Lights didn't snap to exact percentages—they faded with character. Sometimes not perfectly smooth, but real.

And when showtime came, there was no "Go" button triggering a thousand cues. It was hands-on faders. Timing in your head. Watching the performers, feeling the music, riding the levels live. If something went wrong—and it did—you fixed it in the moment. No undo. No backup file. Just experience.

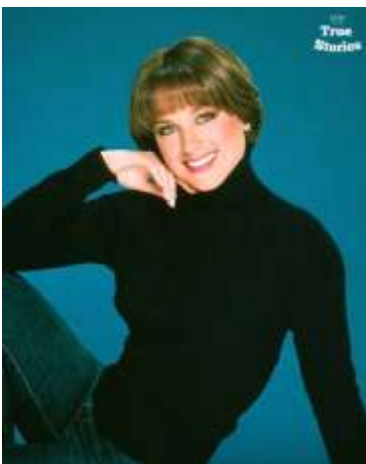
But that was the magic of it.

The ice would glow under those Par cans, the skaters cutting through beams of light that you had physically aimed, physically built. Every look was yours—not because a computer stored it, but because you *made* it happen. There was a kind of pride in that. A kind of connection you don't quite get the same way anymore.

Looking back, the gear was basic. By today's standards, almost primitive. But the work? The craft? That was anything but those were the good old days—when lighting wasn't just programmed...It was performed.

Thank you Stephanie Perom for posting this great memory of Dorothy.

Yes, it was a bit of a dream to skate in Ice Capades - and ... get to know Dorothy - a bit. Loved her growing up! In a big way, she inspired me. In life, she was always kind, and had a fun personality. I loved sneaking to watch her skate (both her numbers)... (for non-skaters - watching between the cracks in the backstage curtain). Some really terrific memories...



Dorothy Hamill skated the cleanest free program of her life in Innsbruck in 1976 and won Olympic gold, then discovered that winning was the most dangerous moment of her career. The medal gave her fame. The contracts tried to take everything else.

Before Hamill, American figure skating rewarded spectacle. Big jumps. Big drama. After Hamill, judges and audiences were forced to reckon with something quieter and harder to exploit. Precision. Edge control. Musical restraint. She did not fall. She did not melt down. She did not beg the audience to love her. She simply ex*cut*d.

That terrified the system.

At 19, Dorothy Hamill became America's sweetheart overnight. Television specials. Ice shows. Endorsements. Executives rushed in with contracts written for obedience, not longevity. Long touring schedules. Limited

creative control. Little financial upside. Hamill signed some and resisted others, learning quickly that Olympic glory did not translate to leverage unless you fought for it.

The sport did not protect her.

Within years, skating politics shifted. Judges began rewarding risk over mastery. Younger skaters arrived with bigger jumps and messier programs. Hamill's style, once revolutionary, was quietly rebranded as "safe." The same consistency that won her gold became a liability in a sport addicted to escalation.

She pivoted again.

Instead of chasing medals or validation, Hamill moved into professional skating and television, building a career that did not require self destruction. Then the private cost arrived. In 1988, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She kept it quiet at first, then chose visibility on her own terms. No inspiration branding. No soft focus narrative. Just facts and treatment.

Years later, another reckoning surfaced.

In 2008, Hamill publicly revealed she had lived for decades with chronic depression, including a suicide attempt in her twenties, shortly after Olympic fame hit. The timing mattered. She was not confessing for absolution. She was correcting the myth that success equals safety.

Dorothy Hamill was never fragile.

She was disciplined in a system that confuses discipline with disposability. She survived a sport that burns through young women, an industry that sells innocence fast, and an audience that expects gratitude forever. Dorothy Hamill did not lose relevance.

She refused to let winning be the thing that destroyed her.

Upcoming Events



CELEBRATING THE JOY
OF DANCING ON ICE

Ice Theatre of New York, Inc[®]
presents

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

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

OLYMPIC ARTIST SERIES

A message from our Founder & Artistic Director, Moira North:

Special Announcement!

Over the last 17 days of the **Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympic Games**, we have reflected joyfully on some of the most beautiful partnerships **Ice Theatre of New York** has shared with Olympic artists through this editorial series. But as much fun as that's been, the future is even *more* exciting.

So it is with great enthusiasm that I announce Ice Theatre of New York's 2026 honoree: **Nathan Chen**, the 2022 Team USA Olympic gold medalist!



Nathan Chen will be honored at our annual gala on May 4th, and [you are cordially invited](#) to join us for a dazzling evening celebrating artistry, athleticism, and the skating community.

Nathan has shared a longtime association with us, his first coach, **Stephane Grosscup**, was an early ITNY performer. Stephane was the recipient of our 2018 alumni award and will be a co-chair of our upcoming gala!

We are thrilled to welcome Nathan Chen to our Hall of Honorees!

Moira North

Attend the 2026 Gala honoring Nathan Chen

<https://givebutter.com/ITNY26Gala>



The website, 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!

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