



Sad News



With profound sadness and immense love, we share the passing of beloved Cathy Steele Bietak - August 21, 2026

Cathy was truly one of a kind. An extraordinary artist, a visionary choreographer, a cherished leader, and, to so many, the greatest adagio skater of all time. Her strength, elegance, artistry, and unmistakable spirit helped define generations of ice performance and inspired countless skaters, creators, and audiences around the world.

For more than 90 remarkable years, Cathy lived a life filled with creativity, adventure, laughter, and love. At the heart of that life was her enduring partnership and marriage with the love of her life, Willy Bietak. A partnership that shaped not only their own beautiful love story, but the very fabric of the skating world.

We will miss Cathy immensely. We also celebrate a life lived fully and brilliantly. Her legacy lives on in every breathtaking lift, every bold creative choice, every artist encouraged to dream bigger, and every audience member touched by the magic she helped create.

Thank you, Cathy, for your talent, your heart, your courage, and the light you brought to every stage and every life you touched. Forever in our hearts.



Rhapsody for Piano & Ice – Phil & Cathy's adagio.

Thank you, David Sadleir for preserving this iconic moment.

<https://youtu.be/z9nogAkVpKY?si=h45uTE8x1DkR8BCz>

Krista Lin Thompson – August 1, 2026



With profound sadness, we announce the unexpected passing of Krista Lin Thompson of Mansfield, Texas, on Aug. 1, 2026. Her passing was sudden and tragic, leaving an immeasurable void in the hearts of all who knew and loved her. Memorial Service: 12 – 1 p.m. Monday, Aug. 10, 2026, in Greenwood's Live Oak Chapel, 3100 White Settlement Rd., Fort Worth 76107. Born on Jan. 28, 1970, Krista was raised in River Oaks, Texas, where she built a lifetime of cherished memories and lifelong friendships. As a child, she spent countless hours riding her horse along the levees of the Trinity River, where she developed a lifelong love of the outdoors and a fearless, adventurous spirit. Krista was also

a gifted and accomplished figure skater. She dedicated years to perfecting her craft and graduated from Castleberry High School with the Class of 1988 before pursuing one of her lifelong dreams-performing with the **Ice Capades** during the 1988-1989 season.

[Link to complete obituary](#)

Virginia "Ginger" Lee Osterholt – August 1, 2026



Virginia "Ginger" Lee Osterholt, 87, passed away peacefully on August 1. Born on September 8, 1938, in Roscoe, California, to Harvey and Genevieve Christiansen, she graduated from Sioux City Central High School in Iowa before fulfilling a lifelong dream by touring with the **Ice Capades**, an adventure she always remembered fondly.

She later married Larry Hancock, and together they raised three sons: Michael, Jeffery, and Jerry. Ginger's greatest pride and joy was always her family. Ginger enjoyed a long and successful career at First National Bank in Sioux City, Iowa. She was a devoted member of Mayflower Congregational Church and Eastern Star, where she valued the friendships, connections, and sense of community they provided. She loved gathering with her children, seven grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren, celebrating holidays, milestones, and everyday moments while creating bonds and memories that will last for generations. Following her retirement, she moved to Spirit Lake, Iowa, where she enjoyed living near family, spending time in the beautiful Okoboji lakes area, and making many treasured memories with friends.

Ginger lived life with honesty, humor, and a zest for adventure. She was an avid reader, loved to travel, enjoyed playing bingo and cards, and had a unique way of balancing a little sass with an even bigger heart. She was a woman who walked by faith, spoke her mind, loved deeply, and embraced life fully.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harvey and Genevieve Christiansen; her sisters, Kay Gengler and Claudia Baker; and her sister-in-law, Patricia Christiansen.

[Ginger Osterholt Obituary Aug 1, 2026 - Turner Jenness Funeral Home](#)

Barbara Kossler – Aug. 9, 2026



Barbara Lynch Kossler passed away peacefully on August 9, 2026, at the age of 90, leaving behind a rich legacy defined by grace, devotion to her family, and a strong, steadfast faith.

Born and raised in [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#), Barbara lived a vibrant young life, including a brief turn as a skater with **the Ice Capades**. She traded the ice for a life together with the love of her life, the late Regis George Kossler. In 1966, Barbara and Regis relocated from Pittsburgh to Connecticut, where they established deep roots and built their home and family.

Barbara enjoyed a long and accomplished career as an Executive Assistant at General Dynamics Electric Boat, retiring in 1997 after decades of dedicated service. Beyond her professional work, faith was the central pillar of her life. A devout Catholic, she was an active, longtime parishioner at St. Joseph Catholic Church in [New London, Connecticut](#), and a passionate supporter of the Maryknoll Sisters.

Above all else, Barbara cherished her family, and it gave her great happiness to gather over the Fourth of July weekend for one last celebration with both close and extended family members. She is survived by her sister, Chriss; her brother, John; her three children, Cathie, Matthew, and Stephanie; and her three beloved grandchildren, Sadie, Samuel, and Jacob, all of whom brought her endless pride and joy.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 AM on August 21st at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 17 Squire St, New London, CT. Interment alongside her beloved Regis at St. Mary Cemetery in New London will follow on a later date for close family. Flowers are welcome, or memorial donations in Barbara's honor may be made to the Maryknoll Sisters (maryknollsisters.org).

Our Alumni in the News

Racquet Club mentor Deena Beacom named 2026 Skate Canada coach of the year



Even in the middle of summer, Racquet Club of Victoria director of skating Deena Beacom is most at home in an ice rink, as she is this week guiding 2026 B.C. novice champion Ruby Blake in a major competition in Anaheim, California. Seven of her skaters will also be competing this weekend in the Wild Rose Invitational in Edmonton.

It is the sort of dedication and success that has earned Beacom the 2026 Skate Canada national coach of the year award.

"I was shocked. It is such an honour to be noticed, not just for me, but for our club and all of Vancouver Island figure skating," said Beacom, in her 28th year of guiding the Racquet Club skaters.

"Especially considering there are so many great figure-skating coaches in Canada. Our sport does well and it has received again an Olympic bump this year after Milan-Cortina, as it does every Winter Olympics year."

So much so that more than 500 skaters will compete in the Racquet Club-hosted 2027 Vancouver Island regional championships to be held in January at Pearkes Arena.

"It has become so big that we require both sheets of ice at Pearkes to host it," said Beacom.

The Racquet Club's home rink is the Ian Stewart Complex, although its future as an arena beyond 2027 is clouded by whatever UVic eventually plans to do with the property.

The burgeoning club also uses ice time at the Pearkes, Archie Browning, Westhills and Save-on-Foods Memorial Centre rinks.

Beacom [nee Woodley] grew up skating and knowing well all the local rinks, along with brother Dan Woodley, who came out of those Greater Victoria minor hockey arenas to star in junior in the WHL with the Portland Winterhawks, and was selected seventh overall in the first round of the 1986 NHL draft by the Vancouver Canucks.

Beacom skated to notice in a different sport and won B.C. championships at all levels and achieved fourth place in women's junior and first place in women's senior in Western Canada in her competitive career. It was a natural transition into her coaching career after a professional career skating with the famous touring **Ice Capades** troupe. Being an athlete herself has informed her coaching.

"As everybody knows, figure skating involves a lot of time and commitment, so you need a lot of patience as a coach," said Beacom, whose long career has led to lasting friendships in the sport, including with former four-time men's world champion Kurt Browning.

"You have to push but also be aware of mental health and balance. I never want to take the pure love and joy of the sport away from my skaters," added Beacom, who has sent many skaters to Canadian nationals.

The Skate Canada coach of the year award will be presented to Beacom in a ceremony in the fall with the date to be determined.



She doesn't just choreograph ice shows. She makes skaters shine.

HUGE congratulations to **Sarah Kawahara**, Artistic Director at Willy Bietak Productions and a true artist in the craft of choreography! Great article from Skate Canada! From competitive skating to the **Ice Capades** at 18, to a career spanning film, television, and world-class live ice shows, Sarah has spent decades doing what few can: making every skater shine. Her philosophy says it best, "It's not about making yourself shine. It's about making the skater shine."

An Emmy Award winner for Scott Hamilton: Upside Down, the visionary behind Tonya Harding's programs in I, Tonya, and the creative force behind unforgettable themed productions with seasons, tarot cards, even the periodic table, Sarah has choreographed for legends like Peggy Fleming, Kurt Browning, Toller Cranston, and Scott Hamilton. Now a proud member of the

Skate Canada Hall of Fame, she brings that same artistry and collaborative spirit to Royal Caribbean cruise ship ice shows.

From rehearsal to spotlight, behind the curtain and center ice - thank you, Sarah, for elevating every cast, every show, and every skater you touch. This one's from all of us at Willy Bietak Productions.

Heidi DeLio Thibert recently retired from being Director of Coaching at U.S. Figure Skating. There really is life after Ice Capades. What an amazing career she had. Enjoy your retirement.



Life on that Frozen Stage

I spent 1976–1986 touring with East, West, and Continental companies. My first two years were on Continental as a "HAP," performing a sister-pair number with my sister, Kitty DeLio (LaForte). After a third year on East, Kitty left for home and college. Loving the road as I did, I returned to East for the Gershwin show. (Family later followed: my younger sister, Becky DeLio (Trampler), joined for a couple tours, one with me; Paul's niece, Christine Sylvester, skated on tour (one with us), and his nephew Rick Sylvester was a crew member for many years.)

When a hurricane hit Atlantic City in 1979 and flooded the parking garage, the lights went out. I was on my way to "The Church" (the bar next door) when a guy with two suitcases (Paul Thibert, 1976 World Professional Champion) asked where he could find Don Watson. In the dark, I led him back to the show office by the light of the little flashlights sold as merchandise in those days. Little did I know that three and a half years later, we would be married!

Paul skated for two years, then moved on to Lighting Director and Assistant Manager. We toured together until 1986, and when expecting our son, Lance (1987), returned to Colorado to be near family. Weirdly, the week after we left tour, Capades was sold—and a Capades truck rolled over on a travel day the next week.

Those tour days were wonderful times with friends, some with trailers like us and some without. We've stayed in contact with many of you, and that time in our lives is cherished and remembered for the rich, full experience it was. There really is nothing like life on the road.

Next Glides

We settled in Fort Collins, where a new rink had just opened near Denver, near my family. Paul was hired as City of Fort Collins Recreation Supervisor/Head Coach for the Edora Pool and Ice Center. I began coaching and

continued for 34 years, coaching through the international level. Our daughter, Katrina (1991), competed at U.S. Figure Skating Junior Nationals in pairs and did three tours with Disney On Ice. During those busy family years, I also earned a paralegal degree and volunteered for USFS and PSA. (Lance is now an attorney, and Katrina is an esthetician in Fort Collins. We don't have grandchildren, but we have an Alaskan Klee Kai (mini-Husky) Cindy-Lou-Who, born Christmas Eve 2020.) During my coaching years, I earned PSA Master Ratings in Singles, Figures, Skating Skills, and Choreography (no doubt a tribute to being Sarah Kawahara's understudy.) These are now known as U.S. Figure Skating Master Coach Accreditations.

My passion for teaching led me to coaching education. I served as Senior Director of Coaching Education and Development for the Professional Skaters Association, and at U.S. Figure Skating as Director of Coaching. Collaborating with USFS staff, we launched the USFS Coach Core Certification (certifying coaches for the first time in the organization's history). The groundbreaking Coach I.C.E. (*Inspiring. Coaching. Excellence.*) coach development pathway was created across six pillars: Education, Development, Information, Support, Impact, and Recognition. Believing deeply in coaches as professionals, we also created the USFS Coaching Standards of Professionalism.

After winning the USOPC Sport Science Coach of the Year in 2009, I was so honored to receive the 2025 Coach Educator of the Year from the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee. After 17 years as a coach developer in figure skating, I retired this recent June (2026).

Greatest Joys of Three Careers in Skating (Four if you count competing)

I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities, relationships, and experiences that have meant so much to me. Those ten years on tour were the most fun and fulfilling days I could imagine – once in a while I will still dream that I'm late for opening number and can't find a gaiter! Coaching those who love skating was such a joy. But it has been an incredible privilege to serve and be part of the development of figure skating coaches, growing alongside so many dedicated professionals, domestically and internationally. I hope my work will be measured by the lives touched, the wisdom shared, the people encouraged, and the legacy of service passed on to me by so many wonderful coaches, past and present.

The grandest gift of these decades is the lasting friendships with fellow performers on tour (some who are now coaches or officials). You are all deeply cherished and have made this journey so special. I will continue to love figure skating, especially coaches, coaching, and performing live.

Paul and I now live in Windsor, CO, and feel lucky to be retired while young enough to enjoy it. We attended one of the Las Vegas reunions, and it was so wonderful to reconnect with many of you. We both love attending Disney On Ice every spring when it comes to northern Colorado to reminisce about our years on tour. If any of you would like to reach out, contact me at heidithibert12@gmail.com. Paul and I would love to hear from you.

Upcoming Events



This is going to be a really special weekend! Randy Gardner will be interviewing Nancy in person at the luncheon. There will be a silent auction with many fabulous items to bid on. A VIP reception in the evening and a half day on ice workshop led by Nancy on Sunday. Tickets are available for the luncheon, VIP reception, On Ice Workshop with Nancy. Plus, we have fabulous opportunities to sponsor and/or advertise at the event.



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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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