



Sad News

Otto Jelinek – Sept. 5, 2026



OTTAWA -- Otto Jelinek, a former world-champion figure skater and federal cabinet minister, has died at the age of 86.

"He was quite the ambitious guy," his younger brother Henry said Sunday, a day after Jelinek's death. "He was also sincerely and strongly a Canadian guy, who did everything he could to help this country."

Jelinek was born in Prague in 1940, and his family fled Czechoslovakia's communist government, arriving in Canada in 1952.

His father owned a successful cork factory in Prague and later rebuilt it in Oakville, Ont., a town between Toronto and Hamilton.

Jelinek and his sister Maria represented Canada in paired figure skating at the 1960 Winter Olympics in California.

In 1962, the pair won an emotional gold medal back in Prague, as champions of world figure skating. Henry said his siblings made the family proud by disproving the communist regime's propaganda of being the best system in the world.



The pair toured with the **Ice Capades** entertainment show while Jelinek became a sports commentator for CTV. He also started a company manufacturing hockey and figure skates.

In 1972, Jelinek entered federal politics, representing a Toronto riding before switching to the Oakville area. His 21 years in Parliament included a term as national revenue minister under then prime minister Brian Mulroney, as well as portfolios in sport and multiculturalism.

Jelinek described himself as politically right-of-centre, and he said he had been involved in backroom politics during the era of former prime minister John Diefenbaker.

As a young MP, buried deep in the Tory opposition benches during the 1970s, Jelinek baited Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau as a closet communist.

When the Tories swept to power in 1984, Jelinek became minister of amateur sport, later adding multiculturalism, public works, and supply and services to his resume.

In 1989 he became revenue minister, implementing and defending the GST while fighting an uphill battle against cross-border shopping.

Jelinek once remarked that he would make a poor diplomat because he speaks his mind too easily, such as in 1991 when he suggested the Tory government may have taxed Canadians too aggressively — earning him the wrath of some cabinet colleagues.

"I have a view on everything," he told Hill reporters in 1993, such as saying Canada's multiculturalism policy "has played its role" and should be shelved.

"I for one resent being referred to as a hyphenated Canadian. I believe we have to get rid of hyphenated Canadians," he told reporters in a scrum.

Jelinek also said it was unfair Ottawa spends so much on health care "just because every time a little kid has a runny nose the mother takes him to a doctor."

That year, Jelinek was shuffled out of cabinet and he said he would not seek election.

Jelinek announced his eventual retirement from politics to reporters, saying he had told his riding executive he would run for the party leadership only 24 hours prior.

"I was set to go until I ran into these guys — my wife and my two boys, aged 10 and five years old. And suddenly life's reality hit home," Jelinek was quoted saying in a Canadian Press report, which noted his voice was cracking, with tears welling up in his eyes.

"It hit right where it counts — in the heart. Because these children have been growing up with a part-time father."

After politics, Jelinek took a job with a company that partnered with a firm that won the right to operate part of Pearson International Airport in Toronto, a move he said complied with conflict-of-interest rules.

The privatization of the airport was cancelled and became a major election issue. In 1994, Jelinek was among those who refused to testify to Parliament about the cancelled deal. The Bloc Québécois at the time threatened to subpoena him and others.

Jelinek later moved to the Czech Republic and launched a consultancy in Prague, focused on helping Canadian and U.S. businesses get established in eastern Europe. He returned to Canada to retire.

In 2013, then-prime minister Stephen Harper appointed Jelinek as Canadian Ambassador to the Czech Republic. The role included overseeing the lifting of visa requirements for Czech nations, which had become a thorny issue that threatened to derail a free trade-agreement with the European Union.

Henry Jelinek said the family marveled that they went from fleeing communism to having Jelinek represent Canada as ambassador in the country of his birth.

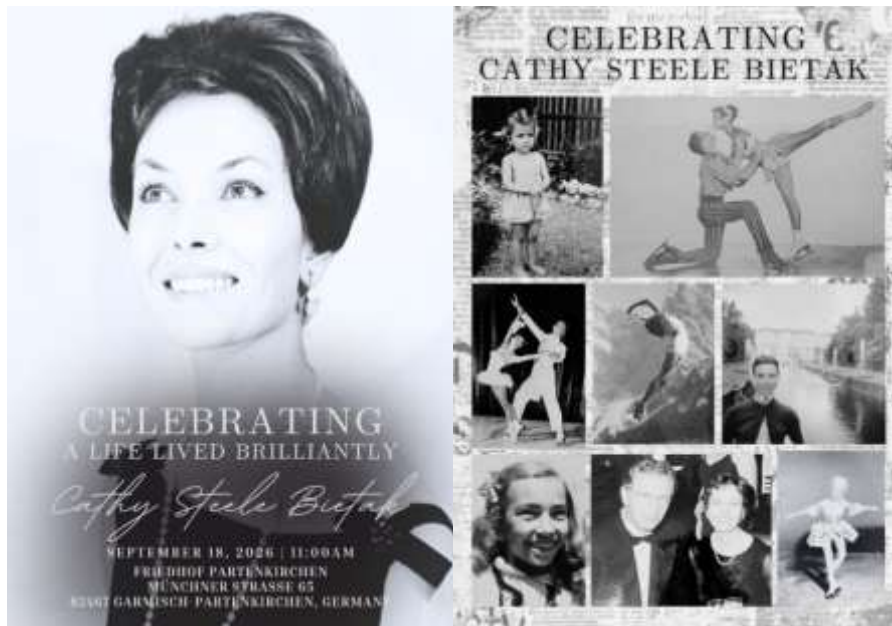
Jelinek said his brother spent much of his retirement alongside Lake Ontario, where he loved gardening, golf, tennis, Frank Sinatra songs and parties.

"He loves to tell stories which he often exaggerates a little bit," Henry Jelinek said. "If somebody would need something, he would be there -- always."

Jelinek died peacefully Saturday at the Trillium Health Centre in Mississauga, Ont., after living with Parkinson's disease for nearly 20 years, his brother said. "He took it with great heroism and dignity, to the very end."



<https://www.koprivataylor.com/obituaries/otto-jelinek>



Our Alumni in the News

Olympic Skating Legend, Who Captivated Fans at the 1984 Winter Olympics, Names the Greatest Performance of His Career. He was like an ambassador of joy.

Jul 3, 2026 5:05 PM EDT



By [Meredith Gordon](#) Trending News Writer, Parade



Scott Hamilton, 67, is one of the most recognizable figure skaters in history. Known for his athletic style, inventive performances, and signature backflip, Hamilton became an international sensation after winning the men's singles gold medal at the [1984 Winter Olympics](#). He later founded the [Stars on Ice](#) tour and remains one of the sport's most respected television commentators and analysts. Now, the revered athlete is turning the spotlight on himself, naming what he considers the greatest performance of his career.

Hamilton retired from amateur skating in 1984 and from professional skating in 2001, but he remains one of the biggest personalities in figure skating thanks to his television work and social media presence. In a post shared on his social media platforms, Hamilton revisited his iconic "Walk This Way" performance for *Stars on Ice*, writing, "There are nights you never forget, and this was one of them. Walk This Way was the most fun I've ever had on the ice, and honestly, it may have been the greatest night of skating in my career. Sometimes the best performances happen when you let go, trust the moment, and simply enjoy the ride."

Why "Walk This Way" Became One of Scott Hamilton's Signature Performances

Throughout his skating career, Hamilton became known for his energetic, highly athletic performances, often embracing characters, creative costumes, and memorable props to create legendary crowd-pleasing routines.

Hamilton's "Walk This Way," originally created as an ISU short program, evolved into what he described as a "pure audience number," featuring a series of hilarious walks—from the moonwalk to a Mick Jagger-inspired strut—that helped create what he now calls the greatest night of skating in his career.

Scott Hamilton's Lasting Impact on Figure Skating

For many fans, Hamilton's performances transcended sports and became family traditions. He offered entertainment that parents and children could enjoy together. For those who grew up in the 1980s and [1990s](#) and are now parents themselves, Scott Hamilton's performances serve as a photo album of childhood memories.

Fans can recall routines like "Walk This Way" and his unforgettable performance to "Hair"—complete with a massive wig—as snapshots of life before social media and streaming made entertainment instantly accessible. An everyman with exceptional athleticism who brought warmth and personality to a sport often known for its stoicism, Scott Hamilton became more than an athlete—he became an ambassador of joy.

"All of my family skipped everything to watch this together," commented one fan on the athlete's [TikTok](#) account.

Another added, "Sir you were amazing to watch on that ice. So glad I grew up watching you."

Hearing Hamilton reflect on his iconic performances, including his beloved "Walk This Way" routine, underscores how much genuine joy he brought to the ice. His enthusiasm was unmistakable, and audiences felt it with every performance.

Hamilton won one Olympic gold medal, four World Championship titles, and four U.S. national championships, completing one of the most dominant careers in modern men's figure skating. He is also a [cancer survivor](#), author, and [advocate](#) who founded the Scott Hamilton [CARES Foundation](#), which supports research into less toxic cancer treatments while educating and mentoring patients and their families.

Accolades aside, Scott Hamilton's exuberance on the ice brought [happiness](#) and inspiration to [generations](#) of children and their families through unforgettable routines like "Walk This Way"—a performance that may ultimately stand as his greatest achievement of all.

<https://parade.com/entertainment/olympic-skating-legend-scott-hamilton-greatest-performance>

Who remembers them?



The Burling Triplets, appearing in 'Ice Capades of 1950' at the Empress Hall.

Meet the Burling Triplets are a legendary figure skating sisters, Glenna, Gloria and Gladys Burling.

Born March 13, 1929 in Toronto, Canada. They are identical twins.

What made them famous:

1. **Ice Capades** stars from age 16: In 1945 they joined the Ice Capades and became a huge draw. They toured the world for *45 years* with the Ice Capades and Ice Follies / Ice Cycles, always chaperoned by their mother.
2. Royal performance: One of their career highlights was performing before the King and Queen of England at Empress Hall.
3. Vegas showgirls on ice: By the late 1950s they moved to Las Vegas and headlined skating shows at The El Cortez, The Thunderbird, and The New Frontier.
4. TV appearance: They appeared with the George Arnold Ice Revue on *The Milton Berle Show* on December 24, 1958.
5. The "Golden Girls": They kept skating and performing into their 60s and 70s. By the late 90s they were known in Vegas as the modern-day Golden Girls.

Glenna Burling passed away May 13, 2019 at age 90 in Las Vegas. Gloria is the last surviving sister. If you Google "Burling Triplets" there's a great little documentary about them — three sisters who literally spent their whole lives together on ice.

They were before Peggy Fleming / Sonja Henie's era of Olympic stars — they were pure entertainment skaters, like the Harlem Globetrotters of figure skating.

A Glimpse of the Past



Ronald Frederick "Ronnie" Robertson was an American figure skater who was best known for his spinning ability. He won the silver medal at the 1956 Winter Olympics, became one of the youngest male figure skating Olympic medalists. He twice won the silver at the World Figure Skating Championships. He retired from skating after the 1956 U.S. Championships, where he was nearly disqualified after he was accused by the German Figure Skating Federation for excessive expenses on a European tour.

His father, Albert Robertson, a naval architect, accused Hayes Jenkins of trying to disqualify his son. After a huge fight with the U.S. Figure Skating Federation, Robertson was not disqualified after he lost to Jenkins and retired from competitive figure skating and signed a two-year contract with the **Ice Capades** for \$100,000. During the 1964–65 New York World's Fair, Robertson appeared as the main attraction for Dick Button's Ice Travaganza show.

This is Ronnie at his best. Taken from "Summer On Ice", a 1961 TV production which featured the cast of Ice Capades and included Rosemary Clooney, Tony Randall and Tab Hunter (who skated in this!). Being a cast member of Ice Capades at that time got me in this show which was great, but what was really the best was knowing Ronnie Robertson, one of the world's greatest skaters.

Ronnie Robertson's "Pagliacci"

Want Ad

TO PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS

Ice Capades, Inc. (Division of Metromedia) is seeking figure skaters who are no longer interested in continuing training for competitions but are interested in following a figure skating career. Girls should be between the height of 5' to 5'6", weight according to height. Boys between 5'8" to 6'. They should be able to perform "2nd Test" figures and simple "Free Style" and be 16 to 21 years of age, with attractive appearance and personality.

Ice Capades invites professional teachers to aid them in their quest for new talent. Any professional who knows of prospective talent should write a note to Mr. Bill Bain, Ice Capades, 7011 3rd Ave., New York, N. Y., stating that a girl or boy is being sent to be auditioned by the show to the nearest city where the show is playing. The audition will be arranged. If talent sent to Ice Capades by a professional teacher is hired by Ice Capades, suitable remuneration will be made to the teacher for his efforts on its behalf.

Upcoming Events



On **October 18th** at 6:45 PM, UNCLE ROY will have its New York City premiere at SVA Theatre as part of NewFest! This is the city where Roy lived his life after his career with Holiday on Ice. When he moved to New York, he picked up a gig performing exhibition skating at the Rockefeller Center ice rink, which kept him afloat while he built his second career as a photographer.

The city is ultimately where Roy built his legacy with his camera. He shot headshots, and he also did something almost nobody else was doing: photographing men "wearing only light." Roy created his male nudes authentically and with dignity, at a moment when the world often refused to look at queer people.

This is Roy's city! With our screening of UNCLE ROY, we are bringing him back home.



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



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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