

# Dunchurch's Floyd Thomson a force to be reckoned with

**R**egrettably, I missed the recent big doings on the Parry Sound waterfront when some notables from the hockey world were inducted into the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame.

I was vaguely aware that the event was scheduled, but as often happens when one attains a certain age, it was all over before I gave it a second thought.

Specifically, I wish I had been there to witness Floyd Thomson, of Dunchurch, being handed a surprise package containing a souvenir of his days as a figure to be reckoned with on the left wing of St. Louis Blues hockey teams of the 1970s.

Floyd was one of six individuals added, on June 10, to the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame's pantheon of local hockey figures. And in my estimation, there could have been no more worthy individual to elevate to that august body than Floyd Thomson.

I first gained an appreciation for the man (or boy, actually) in the summer of 1968, or thereabouts. In those days, I often pitched in to help my brother Don on the farm in the hectic haying season. One hot July day, the task before us was to move a field full of hay bales into the barn before rain arrived. I was much relieved when, as we left the barn, a husky, fair-haired youngster leaped aboard the wagon to help me manhandle that vast acreage of hay from field to wagon and from wagon to haymow.

That youngster, of course, was Floyd Thomson. At age 17 or 18, he was playing junior hockey with Garson-Falconbridge up in the Nickel Belt, and, with his sights firmly set on the big leagues, this was his way of stay-

## MACFIE

*By John Macfie*

ing in shape during the off season. And gusto with which young Floyd flung those heavy bales was a joy to watch - and a burden off my shoulders.

Floyd graduated to Fort Wayne, Indiana, of the International Hockey League, for the 1969-70 season, then, along with his cousin, Jim Whittaker, went to South Africa to play summer hockey. Following that, the St. Louis Blues signed him and installed him in their Kansas City farm team.

There, he played only six games before being called up to the big show, where he nailed down a spot on the Blues roster that would endure for six full seasons.

The other day, I asked Floyd to name his most memorable NHL moment.

Well, he said, that first big league game, against the Minnesota North Stars, certainly rated consideration. He remembers being so pumped just before the game that he phoned his grandmother in Dunchurch to send word up to a hunting camp near Maple Island where he knew his father, Fred "White Pine" Thomson, would have settled in for the annual deer hunt. Knowing Fred, I'll bet he climbed the tallest pine around in a desperate attempt to tune in a broadcast of the game.

However, that euphoric instant had to yield to the night Floyd scored his first NHL goal, which happened to be the winning marker in a game against



**Floyd in flight. Floyd Thompson as a winger on the St. Louis Blues hockey team of the 1970s.**

the Toronto Maple Leafs, in Maple Leafs Gardens. That time, no long distance phone call was needed. Fred, and Floyd's mother, Ollie Thomson, witnessed the event from choice seats directly behind the Maple Leaf goal.

If I hadn't asked Floyd for the hockey highlight of his NHL career, he surely would have responded with the moment, part way through his stay with the Blues, when he met an alluring, 20-year-old, St. Louis lass named Sally Guitteau. Sally tells me that they were engaged after a mere half-dozen dates.

Prior to their marriage in 1975 Floyd had bought a farm, picturesquely situated in a valley in Farley's Road, south of Dunchurch. The couple spent off-seasons there, then, when Floyd left hockey, they took up farming seriously, and beef cattle still roam the acreage.

Floyd and Sally quickly established themselves as popular figures in Dunchurch society. Invariably, when I meet Sally, I'm reminded of the old song "You Came a Long Way From St. Louis."

When I asked her if she endured much culture shock in the move from a large American city to a farm on Farley's Road, she exclaimed, "I loved it right away."

Floyd's welcoming Dunchurch-pioneer extended family, and the friendly community at large, she says, made it easy.

Since settling down at Dunchurch, Floyd and Sally Thomson have raised two sons, Rusty and Trevor, and launched them successfully into the adult world.

Today, Floyd works as facilities manager for the Municipality of Whitestone, a high-profile position that suits his outgoing personality admirably. And if this story has made you want to meet Sally, drop by Precision Optical in the Parry Sound Mall next time you need your glasses adjusted.

Floyd Thomson is an avid angler and hunter (last fall, he bagged both a deer and a moose with the primitive muzzle-loader he now uses), and a contingent of enthusiastic sportsmen friends turned up to witness his induction into the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame. It was this group who engineered the

surprise package mentioned above.

Floyd had often expressed regret at not saving some tangible memento of his career with the St. Louis Blues.

A year or so ago, fellow hunter Ritchie Macfie happened upon an Internet site offering a sports memorabilia collection for sale. In it was a Blues jersey worn by left-winger Floyd Thomson some 30 years ago. Unbeknownst to Floyd, friends and relatives chipped in to acquire the item, and it was set aside waiting an appropriate moment to present it to him.

That moment, of course, arrived this past June 10 down at the Bobby Orr Hall of Fame. As I said, I wish I'd been there.



**Floyd and Sally Thompson in their salad days.**