

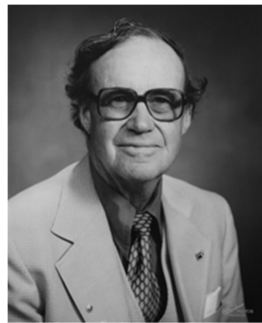
Lovell McDonnell's Acceptance Speech

Thank you for those kinds words Keith.

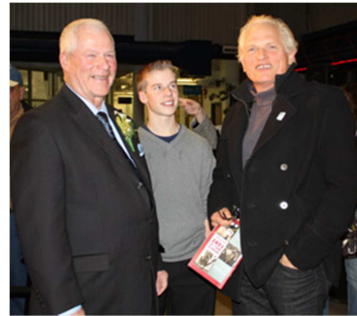
They are appreciated.

First of all I would like to congratulate Stan Schwartz for his accomplishments and being inducted into the Medicine Hat Sports Wall of Fame.

It is indeed an honour to be included on this wall with you and the other outstanding sports people from the great community of Medicine Hat. I am pleased Lorne Holden has been recognized and inducted to this wall earlier. He started Little League in 1954 and deserves all the credit for the tremendous amount of work that must have been involved in starting a program from scratch.



Lorne Holden



Frank Merkl and Lovell McDonnell

I would like to thank Frank Merkl for nominating me and also thank the City and citizens of Medicine Hat for this recognition.

While it is an honor I must say it is also a humbling experience because of the large number of people who have contributed to the programs, teams, projects and events that I have been involved with. There are a lot of people who could share in this recognition.

I have always been a person who liked sports and felt it was good for youth to be involved in sports of their choice. Baseball is a sport I played so it was easy to be enthused about getting involved at the youth level when my children began to play. Rob in baseball and hockey and Tanis in softball.

Since that time some 30 plus years ago, I have had the privilege of volunteering with numerous individuals, committees, boards, associations, councils, presidents, executives, city council & staff, as well as provincial and federal government representatives. These individuals & groups have all made significant contributions to the community.

The baseball groups of Little League, High School and the American Legion Baseball programs of the Moose Monarchs and MH Knights are where I have been the most

involved. I have however had the pleasure of serving on other great committees like the Medicine Hat Baseball Canada Cup Society, Summer Games, Winter Games, and Medicine Hat Minor Hockey.

It would be difficult to name many people in fear of leaving some out but certainly my family Rob & Brenda and Tanis & Chris along with the grandchildren have been so supportive of my interests that I can not express enough appreciation. Thank you so much for your support and encouragement.

I would also like to "Thank" my friends for all the help you have volunteered over the years. Some of you I met through work, some as neighbors, some through committees & meetings, some through common interests like baseball & hockey, some through mutual friends, some through coffee groups with Maureen, and some through a couple of morning advisory coffee groups I meet with at 10:00 a.m. most days. If you need to solve a problem believe me these morning groups have all the answers.

The thing you all have in common is that you have all been asked or volunteered for a cause and in doing so have contributed to some great accomplishments in our community. I appreciate your efforts.

One of the goals of our baseball program some years ago was to improve facilities and I think the development of facilities would be one of the biggest accomplishments. Thoughts were to build a premier field for each age category that would allow us to host prestigious tournaments at the Provincial, National and International level. I had considerable involvement in accomplishing this task.

Our baseball groups were active in fund raising towards this cause and I was fortunate to develop a good working relationship with the various city departments of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Community Development. We received great co-operation from the Public and Separate school boards and received great support from the City of Medicine Hat and Governments of Alberta and Canada. I was also pleased to find a strong level of community support through significant donations from service clubs, businesses and contractors.

It took some time but since 1991 Medicine Hat programs have now hosted Canadian Championship tournaments at all age levels from 12 years old to the old-timers of 35 & over. Eight national events, the Alberta Summer Games and two Montana/Alberta Championships in that period as well as countless Provincial, Western Canada and invitational events. Keith Bender and Wayne Schlosser were very involved in the early years and Keith would use the well known saying "if you build it they will come." We did build it and they came.

In earlier years when planning with City staff I would see Frank Merkl, Russ Clement, Natalie Sauer & Ron Davis – it was fun to try and figure out the best way to get things done then and still is with Roger, Dave, Kelvin, & Randy. They are supported by a number of other great staff and Natalie is still involved.

The first project Frank and I worked on together was to resolve a concern that a couple of school baseball fields used by our 8 & 9 year olds were not up to standard – they were all grass and had big holes worn around each base to the point players dropped 6 inches when running around the bases. I believe it was Alderman Kelly who got us together. We decided to scrape the grass area around the bases and replace it with sand. It looked great but the sand we installed was too fine and now the concern was that the players were up to their ankles in sand so in attempting to solve one problem we created another.

Some of the comments Frank received were - “first we had holes now it’s like a beach out there.” We learned through this and started to use shale instead of sand and I think we would have been one of the first communities to have shale or grass infields installed at every diamond.

I believe the accomplishments I have been involved in have really been a team effort and are something we as a community can all be proud of.

Thank You Everyone for your support over the years and tonight.

It has been very rewarding getting to know so many great people like you through my involvement in sports and community.