2013 Volleyball Alberta Hall of Fame Award

Builder

Jan Patterson

Jan Patterson is the perfect example of someone who volunteers for an event, gets 'bitten by the bug', and ends up being a key part of the organizing group for years and years!

In 1972, the Alberta Volleyball Association (AVA) and the University of Alberta, jointly hosted the Canadian Volleyball Association (CVA) senior volleyball championships in Edmonton. The 'Nationals' as the championship was called at the time, were the annual culminating tournament in Canadian volleyball. The championships attracted 20 men's and 20 women's teams that year from all across Canada along with a throng of officials, coaches, and managers. CVA meetings were also part of the event.

An event like that takes numerous volunteers and when a friend invited her along to help out with administrative tasks Jan enthusiastically stepped forward and as the old saying goes, 'the rest is history! '

Immediately following the 1972 'Nationals' she got involved with the Edmonton Phoenix Volleyball Club as social convener and by the beginning of the 1980's she had become the club's President. She was an important part of that club which provided a model for others to form clubs and generally encouraged club development in the province.

The AVA, because of Jan's willingness to be involved, was the real beneficiary of her organizational talents. In 1975 she became the Provincial Tournament coordinator and held various positions on the AVA Executive for 20 consecutive years— truly an amazing commitment.

Here is a rundown of her service to the AVA and volleyball in Alberta:
- 1975-76 to 1977-78 – AVA Provincial Tournament Coordinator
- 1978-79 to 1983-84 - Secretary/Registrar for the AVA
- 1984-85 to 1990-91 – Vice-President Administration for the AVA
- 1991-92 to 1994-95 – AVA representative to the CVA

In the mid-seventies the Province of Alberta commenced staging the Alberta Summer Games and Winter Games. Volleyball was in the Winter Games. There were many ramifications of this Alberta Games initiative but the major one was the province being divided into 8 zones. Jan had to make sure there was a representative team from each of the 8 zones, and to do that, qualification tournaments had to be held in each zone – a major coordinating effort. Jan's pioneering work was sound and got things started on the right foot. Indoor volleyball is now part of the Alberta Winter Games and beach volleyball part of the Summer Games.

In 1976 the Volleyball Organizing Committee at the Montreal Olympics came calling and Jan was asked to travel to Montreal to work in the volleyball secretariat. Her administrative abilities learned with the AVA helped the Olympic volleyball competition function smoothly.

In 1983 Edmonton hosted the World University Games (Universiade) and volleyball was one of the premiere events in those Games. Again Jan was one of the leaders from the AVA to help stage the volleyball competition by taking on the position of volleyball co-chair. The Universiade '83 volleyball competition was truly a significant milestone in the development of the sport in the province.

Jan found the time to help at the grass roots level as well. In the beginning days of the Jasper Volleyball Camp in the 1970's she spent parts of six summers at the camp ensuring that the players and coaches had a good experience. In 1986 she took on the Manager's job of the Alberta provincial men's team at the Western Canada Summer games.

The AVA has been very fortunate to have Jan Patterson dedicate so many years to our sport. Because of the longevity of her commitment one could label her 'The Connector'. She got involved in the seventies when the surge in the popularity of volleyball was happening and the AVA was a completely volunteer driven organization. She stayed on until professional staff was hired by the AVA. The transition from running an organization from the kitchen table has given way to a strong association with administrative offices and full-time office staff thanks to people like Jan Patterson.