

Gwendalyn Jean Davies



By Georgie Chiurka

Imagine you are just learning how to walk at three years old and then you lose your left leg! Gwen Davies didn't have to imagine it because it happened to her. At the age of three Davies lost her left leg due to complications at birth. Little did she know that she would win the Canadian Amputee Golf Championship 18 times! Even though Davies lost her leg at three, she lived an incredible life and showed us the importance of perseverance. Since I have started researching about her it has made me interested in what her backstory was, all the achievements that she made and challenges that she faced, and the impact that she had on women's sports.

Davies was born in Falcon Bridge, New South Wales, Australia on the date October 23 1941. In her school days Davies was always rushing in and out of the hospital because just before her third birthday she had her left leg amputated below her knee. She became an above knee amputee in 2005. During a girls trip in New Zealand with her friends she met Malcolm Davies, a Canadian. In the next three years they got married in 1968 near her childhood home before eventually moving back to Canada. When she was 29 Malcolm started his own manufacturing company and Gwen was there to support him while having two children one boy one girl and their names were Gary and Shellie.

Growing up Davies faced many challenges, but that didn't stop her from doing things she loved. In 1984 Davies and her family joined the Green golf and Country Club and that would start a big career for her. Davies won the Ladies Amputee British Open in 1995 while in 2001 she got second in the World Series of Amputee Golf, before coming back in 2002 and getting first. Most people never get the chance to be in the Sports Hall of Fame, but Davies did—and she earned it. She got in the Hall of Fame for being a professional golfer, founder and president of the Canadian Amputee Golf Association for 20 years. Being the President of the Canadian Amputee Golf Association for 20 years can be hard work so eventually she handed over the rails to Kristian Hammerback. Shortly after turning 40 Gwen was heavily involved with volunteering for the Calalta Figure Skating Club.

According to Kristian Hammerback, "Most of the 125 golfers (who are part of the CAGA) benefited from the fruits of her labour", she also said that, 'The truth of the matter is that very few of us Canadians would ever have had the opportunity to meet and create lifelong friendships if it wasn't for Gwen'. This quote makes me think of community involvement. I love everybody who is always willing to help volunteer in some sort of way, but Gwen really stuck out to me. Even though Davies lost her leg at three, she never gave up on people and I want to do the same thing. When I skate on the ice in Morrin, I always try to help my coach and the little kids skate even if they can't stand up. Volunteering is so important to me and I think that Gwen felt the same way about it because if no one volunteers, no small club or sports teams would exist. Davies created a well known golf association all because she volunteered, when she started out she probably had the idea and started out small but as more people caught on she created the Canadian Amputee Golf Association. I live in a small town named Dalum, you probably never

heard of it because it is so small but we are working on it. There have been improvements on the hall, a new playground and more fun programs at the church, that is all because the people in Dalum believe in volunteering. But in the end, Gwen passed away November 30th, 2020 and lived to be 79.

If I were to say anything to Davies it would be “Look at what you completed over your lifetime, you’ve accomplished many great things from being the President of the Canadian Amputee Golf Association to being a mother of two children”. Speaking of Gwen's children when they grew up they also lived a happy life and Davies became a Grandmother of 7 children {William, Cameron, Georgia, Bryn, Jana, and Brody Jones}. I don't think I ever said that Davies actually took up downhill skiing, after turning 40. When I saw that information on the computer it made me think “How is that possible with part of your left leg amputated?”, “ How would you be able to stand up without falling?”. But then I realized “It’s not impossible, and Davies still did it.”



Now that you know everything that I can teach you about this Alberta hero, go out there and make your voice heard! We need to let everyone know that people with disabilities are just as capable as anyone else. Stop telling yourself you can't do the thing you love just because someone told you. You will always have a chance to keep going, and if someone pushes you down just remember what Gwen Davies went through and how hard she had to work.

Sources

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