

Joan Snyder - An Albertan Champion

By Maeve Kelly

Joan Snyder is an inspiring visionary, philanthropist, feminist and grandmother of Canadian women's hockey. These are all the reasons I chose her as my champion. The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, he answered "Man! Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived." This is the opposite of Joan, she lives life NOW, like every day is her last. Always thinking of the next generation and how she can help them. Sadly, her last day came on April 7, 2022, just after reaching the age of 90, but we will not forget her.

Joan has donated an astounding \$100 million to community organizations including \$67.5 million to the University of Calgary and \$5 million to Mount Royal University after she passed. She also donated \$9 million in 2008 to found the Calvin, Phoebe and Joan Snyder Institute for Chronic Diseases. If that's not amazing enough, she additionally donated another \$2 million to the Joan Snyder Program of Excellence in Women's Hockey at the University of Calgary after establishing it in 2011 with \$500,000. Her support also extends to the Salvation Army, the SPCA, Agape Hospice, the Glenbow Museum, Fort Calgary, the Calgary Zoo, Heritage Park, Meals on Wheels, Wood's Homes and the University of Saskatchewan. This list is not comprehensive as Joan's donations are many and of considerable value.

Joan has all this money because she's a businesswoman, an additional reason why I look up to her. Her father, Calvin, died in 1961 leaving the family dealings to her mom, Phoebe. These involved real estate, oil and gas, holdings and farming across Alberta and Saskatchewan. When Joan's mom also lost her life in 1991 she passed the work down to Joan.

As I said earlier; Joan has been nicknamed the grandmother of Canadian women's hockey and here's why. You already know that she donated \$2 million to women's hockey at the University of Calgary but did you realize she never picked a side in the Crowchild Classic? It's a big game between the U of C Dinos and the MRU Cougars, they are like the university version of the Edmonton Oilers and the Calgary Flames. Still, Joan loved men's hockey too. One night,

she was invited to do a puck drop for the Flames and Jarome Iginla was on his 499th goal, like he had been for some time. That night he scored! At the puck drop Joan said something to Iginla and he laughed. Later, Dr. Paul Kubes from U of C asked him what she said. Joan had told Iginla, "You better get this goal, it's my night." And he did, says Kubes. That was Joan, she motivates people. Joan was also known to buy multiple season tickets to Calgary Flames games and hand them out to people who would otherwise not have been able to attend.

Legendary hockey player Haley Wickenheiser was also acquainted with Joan and has only good things to say about her. "Joan was one of those people who puts her money where her support was; which is rare and hard to come by in the women's game." This all proves Joan is an incredible person.

Joan was awarded the Order of Canada in 2013, an achievement that only about 8,000 people have received in our country with a population of 40.1 million. Not only that but Joan has also attained the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Law, meaning she has made notable contributions to the legal field. This degree was bestowed upon her by the Chancellor of the University of Calgary at the time, Dr. Jim Dinning, in 2011.

Even though I just learned about Joan, when I look in the mirror I see her staring back at me, we have so much in common. I remember being overjoyed when my dad told me that there was a PWHL (Professional Women's Hockey League) or when I heard there was going to be a women's pro soccer league. I also LOVE to help out, I have 8 neighbours from the age of 6 to 15 and one year our parents hired a babysitter to look after us all summer. At the end of that summer we held a fair, the kids ran it all right in our front yard. We had lemonade, ring toss, face painting and bracelets for sale. We made about \$100 and we donated it, just like Joan would, to the Alberta Children's Hospital. In addition, I am in my school's business club and we are making fun bags with toys, seeds, freezies and stickers. Our plan is to sell them to students and give that money again, to the Children's Hospital to help research cures and prevent diseases. I am SO excited, it's definitely going to be a highlight of my year! It's just an indescribable feeling knowing you're helping people. Like having a fizzy drink of sunshine on the perfect day.

Every Albertan should know who Joan Snyder is because she has made our home a better place. From education, sports, animals, and health Joan has impacted us all. Whose lives would

be lost without the Snyder Institute for Chronic Diseases? The lessons I have learned from Joan are countless and priceless; such as, *If I have what I need but others don't how can I help?* or, *Would you ever say the legendary **male** hockey player Wayne Gretzky?*

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