

# JUDI GILBERT

Inductee

Belleville Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2022

Athlete, Hockey

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For Judi Gilbert, hockey is in the blood. She grew up watching her uncles Bobby and Dennis Hull on television and spending countless hours on the backyard rink until long after dark. By the age of 8, Judi knew that hockey was her game. Her biggest challenge was that organized opportunities for young girls to play were very limited. In 1976, 11-year-old Gilbert joined one of Belleville's first organized girls' PeeWee team, and in her first season, she was MVP of the league. The following year, Judi played with Junior Girls Belleville Oddfellows team. A natural goal scorer with a diligent work ethic and determination to improve, Judi tallied 38 goals & 35 assists for 73 points in 22 games. The championship team went undefeated in the league and playoffs and Judi was named Rookie of the Year. The Oddfellows took home top honours the following two seasons and Judi repeated as league top scorer and MVP. From 1980-1983, Judi led the Belleville Intermediate Legionettes to three league championships as league top scorer each year. In 1982-83, this team was the first Belleville Women's team to reach and win a Provincial OWHA title. Judi had established herself as a commodity and by the age of 13, multiple schools reached out to invite her to join their hockey programs. She chose York University and was a pivotal member of the women's hockey team from 1984-1987. In the 1985-86 season, Judi led her team in goals and ranked third in scoring in the league, propelling York to a league second place finish in the OWIAA. The following season, York won the OWIAA championship and Judi topped the league in scoring. At that time, there were no women's national championships, women's Olympic hockey or women's world championships. Judi's accomplishments despite limited development opportunities define her as an elite top player in Canada in an era that had not yet recognized women's hockey as it does today. A true pioneer, Judi can be credited in part for the stability and success of Belleville's women's hockey program, and she is a welcome inductee into the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame.