

GREG DOUGLAS & GRANT KERR

# CANUCKS



# AT FORTY

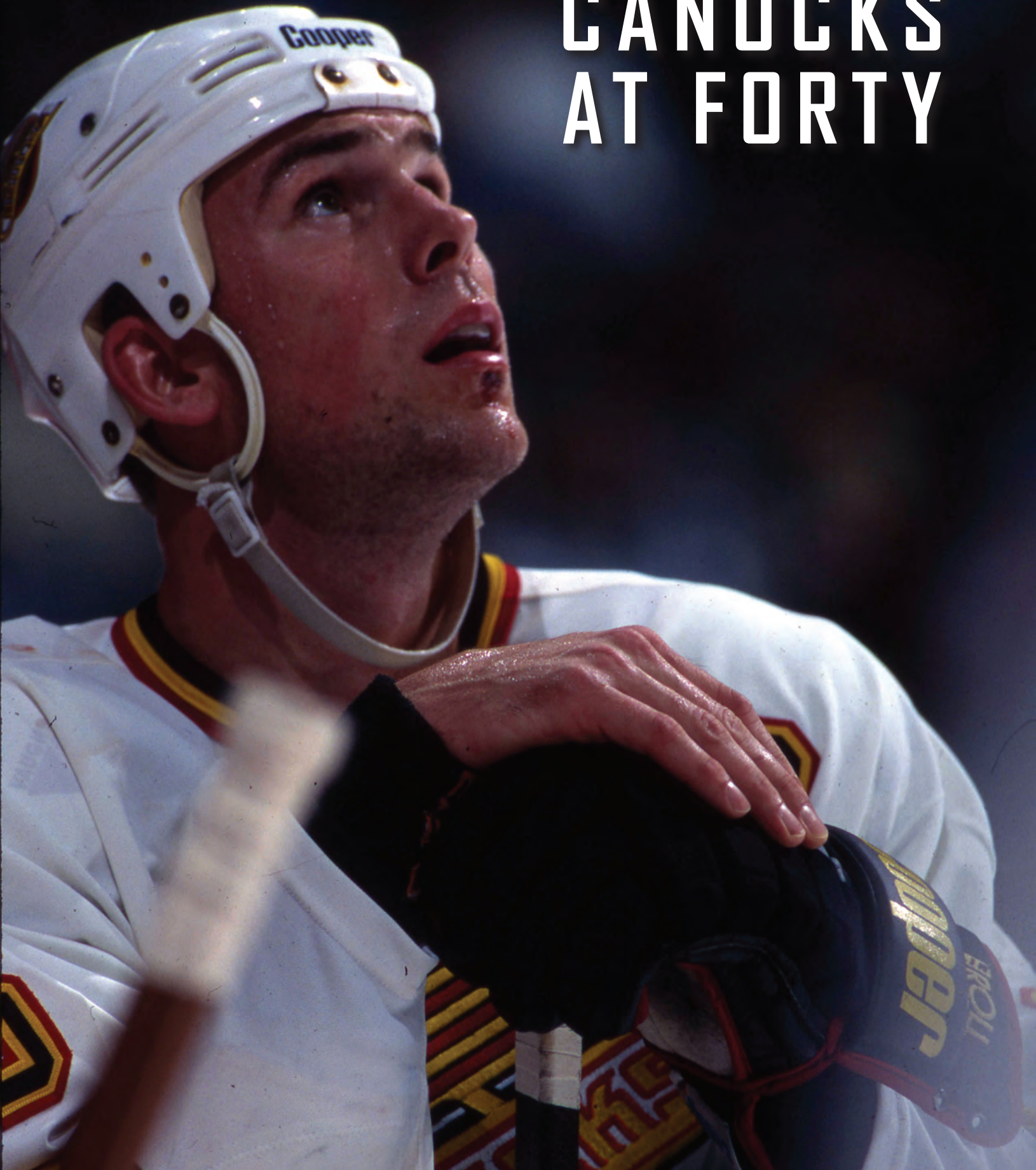
OUR GAME, OUR STORIES, OUR PASSION



FOREWORD BY JIM ROBSON



# CANUCKS AT FORTY





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OUR GAME, OUR STORIES, OUR PASSION



VANCOUVER



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Right: The newly-named  ROGERS ARENA, home of the Vancouver Canucks.

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More than a celebration of 40 years of Vancouver Canucks hockey, this book is a salute to the fans who have helped build this franchise from the ground up. Your dedication and passion will be what puts us over the top.

~ The Vancouver Canucks

To Deirdre, my loving wife and best friend. To my brothers Tom and Norm, and sister Nancy. Also, to Monica and Pierre and two lively grandsons, Kaden and Cole, who are both definite future NHL first-round draft picks.

~ Greg

To Judy, my partner and soul mate. To my sons Scott, Kevin and Christopher, daughter-in-law Marla, grandson Ryan and granddaughters Taylor and Tessa. And never to be forgotten, my loving mother Annis, always an inspiration to the Kerr family.

~ Grant



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# FOREWORD

TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE HAVING FUN.

I know that for a fact. The 40-year history of the Vancouver Canucks in the National Hockey League has just flown by.

It doesn't seem that long ago that I was studying the 1970–71 National Hockey League schedule to see when the Original Six teams were coming to Vancouver.

In 1970, Gordie Howe was a Detroit Red Wing, Bobby Orr was a Boston Bruin, Jean Beliveau was a Montreal Canadien, Bobby Hull was a Chicago Blackhawk, Rod Gilbert was a New York Ranger and Davey Keon was a Toronto Maple Leaf.

They would all come into the Pacific Coliseum wearing those colourful dark uniforms, as the NHL wisely ruled in those days.

Hockey's finest league had finally admitted a team from Western Canada and fans from Winnipeg west were making plans to attend games in Vancouver. Prior to the fall of 1970, the only way to see NHL stars was to squint at the small TV screens, many still in black and white.

Fans would rush into the Coliseum to see the familiar names on the visiting rosters, but often left the rink buzzing about how tough and competitive the brand new home team was. Who wouldn't be impressed by the character of Orland Kurtenbach and Pat Quinn, or the skill of Andre Boudrias, Bobby Schmautz and Dale Tallon.



Above: Hockey Hall of Fame broadcaster Jim Robson witnessed most of the highlights when it comes to the NHL history of the Vancouver Canucks.

Left: It's a championship moment as Canucks players (left to right) Sergio Momesso, Trevor Linden, Greg Adams, Gerald Diduck and Geoff Courtnall admire the Clarence S. Campbell Bowl presented to the Western Conference winners in 1994 at the Pacific Coliseum.

Those are some of the names you will read about in this special volume, put together by some good friends of mine who know how to tell a story.

They will cover many “eras” of the Canucks' first 40 seasons.

There's the Fox era, when Western Hockey League legend Phil (Fox) Maloney became general



Team captain Markus Naslund accepts congratulations from Ed Jovanovski (55) and Todd Bertuzzi (44) after scoring against Chicago.

manager and head coach, leading the Canucks to their first divisional title and playoff appearance. Sure it was only five games against the mighty Canadiens, but it produced a rare win *in* Montreal, plus a series finale that was a long overtime thriller ending with a fluke goal out of the corner by the brilliant Guy Lafleur.

The mid-1970s also produced a couple of memorable draft picks, a talented Ron Sedlbauer and a tough kid from Edmonton named Harold Snepsts, who became one of the most popular Canucks of all time.

The next era of note was the Jake Milford era, when that wily old hockey man rebuilt the franchise. He brought in interesting coaches such as the colourful Harry Neale and the innovative Roger Neilson. (Remember when they made fun

of Roger and called him Captain Video for using something called videotape to study team tendencies and systems?)

Canucks drafting in the Milford area produced character players such as Glen Hanlon, Curt Fraser, Doug Lidster, Garth Butcher and a third-rounder nicknamed “Steamer.” Stan Smyl was the heart and soul of the Canucks for his entire 13-year career.

Milford also reached across the Atlantic like no other GM, bringing in several Swedes, including standouts Thomas Gradin, Patrik Sundstrom and Lars Lindgren. And then Jake invaded Czechoslovakia to sign European stars Ivan Hlinka and Jiri Bubla.

There were other off-ice moves that produced Darcy Rota, Ivan Boldirev, Doug Halward, Tiger Williams and a little-known goaltender named

# There remains just that one major prize to capture. I'm looking forward to standing on the curb at Georgia and Burrard, watching a Stanley Cup parade.

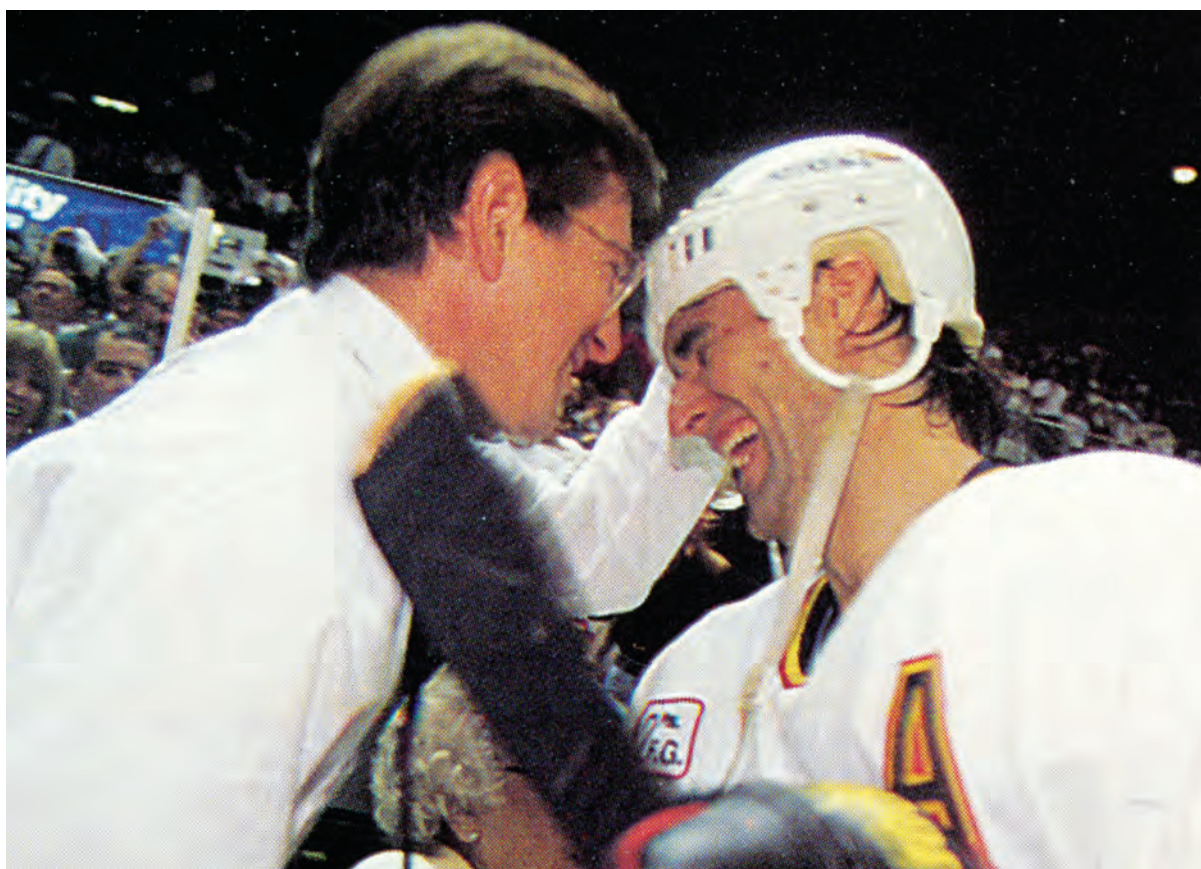
Richard Brodeur, who became “King” Richard in the surprising run all the way to the 1982 Stanley Cup Final.

The mid-1980s were not all rosy for the Canucks and their fans, but it was still exciting when the line of Tony Tanti, Patrik Sundstrom and Petri Skriko came on the ice. That trio produced 191 goals in two seasons.

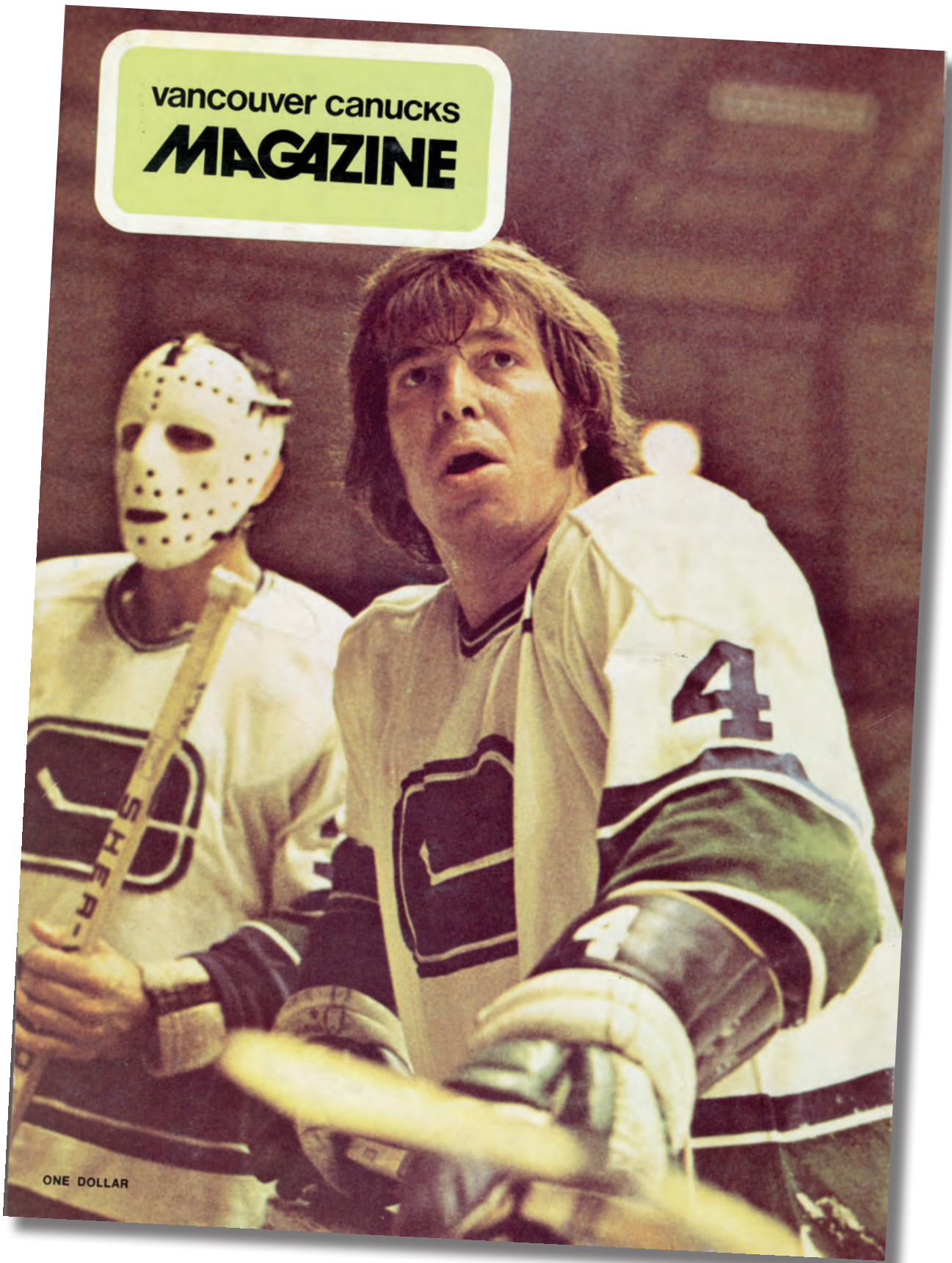
But then came the Quinn era. Arthur Griffiths stole Pat Quinn from the Los Angeles Kings to become general manager of the Canucks and survived

a court case to keep him. The big Irishman's return to Vancouver meant big changes.

The member of the original Canucks went about building a powerhouse through trades, although he drafted two outstanding Canucks legends. One was a team leader from Medicine Hat, Alberta, and Quinn often called the drafting of Trevor Linden one of his best-ever moves. Trevor's huge army of fans would agree. Then there was a fifth-round gem named Pavel Bure, soon named the Russian Rocket, and the most exciting Canuck



Ownership's Arthur Griffiths (left) celebrates the good times with assistant captain Greg Adams during the 1994 run to the Stanley Cup Final.



Tough-as-nails defenceman Barry Wilkins (4) was adept at blocking shots in front of Canucks netminders like George Gardner.



Canucks fans rise up in joyous celebration of another Vancouver goal as the offence clicks against the Los Angeles Kings.

ever. Many of his 288 Vancouver league and play-off goals are still remembered as highlights in Canucks history.

There was the acquisition of Soviet stars Igor Larionov and Vladimir Krutov, plus all those trades. Quinn dealt for standout goalie Kirk McLean, built his deep defence of Lumme, Murzyn, Babych, Hedican, Brown, Diduck, Dirk and Glynn, and traded for forwards Greg Adams, Cliff Ronning, Geoff Courtnall, Sergio Momesso, Murray Craven and Martin Gelin. Add tough Gino Odjick to the mix and the Quinn-era Canucks could walk into any rink in the league knowing they had a good chance to win.

This was the team that brought Canucks fans their most memorable moments—the 1994 Stanley Cup playoffs. Fifteen wins, six in overtime and one of the finest Cup Finals ever.

But that 16th win belonged to the New York Rangers, who celebrated their first Stanley Cup in 54 years—which illustrates just how tough it is to win the oldest trophy in professional sports.

Who can forget that scene at the end of Game 7 in Madison Square Garden? There was a battered, bruised, exhausted captain Trevor Linden, on one knee along the boards, trying to cope with that terrible feeling of coming this far without winning the Cup.

So now we have moved into the Gillis era. The Aquilini family surprised the hockey world when they signed Mike Gillis as Canucks president and general manager in August 2009. A hard worker as a player, a respected player agent, but never before a general manager, Mike Gillis set a high target right off the bat. The Canucks hit the 100-point mark in his first season and continued to excite the fans in a sold-out building.

There remains just that one major prize to capture. I'm looking forward to standing on the curb at Georgia and Burrard, watching a Stanley Cup parade. Some old fan will recognize me and say, "Boy, was this a long time coming."

And I'll say, "It wasn't really that long. It just flew by. Time flies when you're having fun."



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# PREFACE

The rationale behind *Canucks at Forty* was simple: telling you something you don't know.

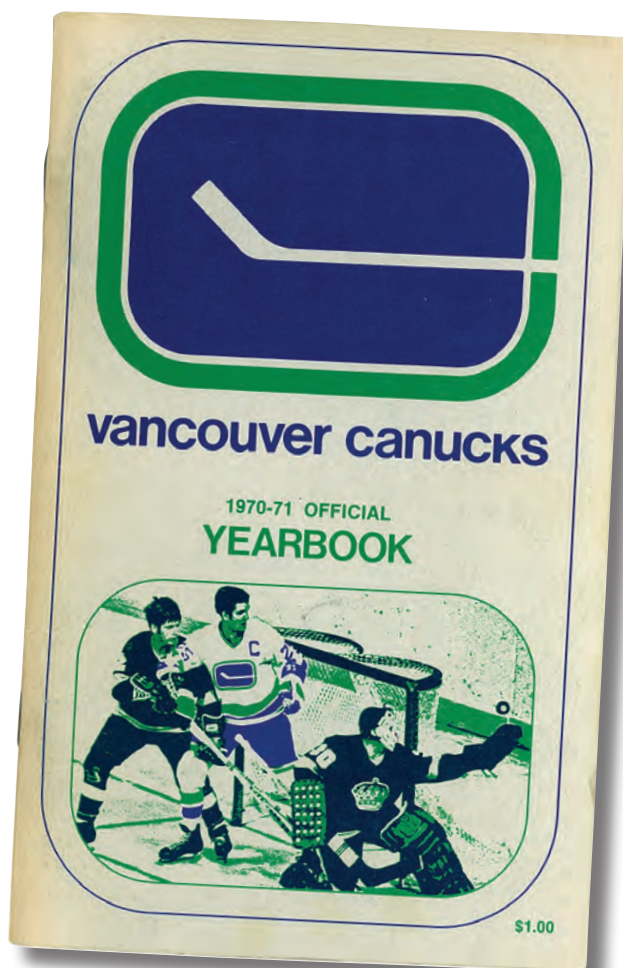
Whether the Vancouver Canucks have recently caught your eye or you've been along for the ride since 1970, you're surely familiar with the greatest moments in team history.

The spin of a roulette wheel. Our first playoff berth. Playing for the Stanley Cup. Towel Power. Tiger's stick ride. Drafting Captain Canuck and the Russian Rocket. Back-to-back Smythe Division wins. A return to the Cup Final. Heartbreak in New York. General Motors Place. Snagging the Sedins. The West Coast Express. The trade for Luongo. Three Northwest Division titles in five years. An Art Ross and Hart Trophy win.

Compelling stories have shaped the legacy of the Canucks, stories that are etched within us all, stories that unite Canucks fans the world over.

This book is a celebration of 40 years of Canucks hockey and the stories that have captivated us, but never before have they been told like this. Unprecedented access to the team's photo archives and commentary from players and coaches was granted to bring you a behind-the-scenes look at some of your dearest Canucks memories and the characters responsible for them.

Dale Tallon, Vancouver's first ever draft pick, became a Canuck thanks to a numerical twist of fate. Rosaire Paiement, aka *Cracklin' Rosie*, once



Above: This is where it all began: Orland Kurtenbach tangling with LA's Dale Hoganson as Denis DeJordy makes a glove save on October 9, 1970.

Left: Henrik Sedin (right) is congratulated by twin Daniel after scoring during a game against the Los Angeles Kings in Vancouver on March 13, 2009.

# In celebrating 40 years of Canucks hockey we're really paying tribute to you for your loyalty, passion and commitment to the team.



Canucks fans always adore their heroes and 1980s defenceman Colin Campbell obliges this enthusiastic group.

endured a scoring slump that even a hypnotist couldn't bump. Garry Monahan scored one of the most significant goals in franchise history on a one-against-six rush. Or did he?

Greg Adams! Greg Adams! Greg Adams! The Canucks forward's playoff goal, and broadcaster Jim Robson's play-by-play call of it, will go down as one of the greatest one-two combinations ever. Queen Elizabeth II got a red carpet welcome over freshly flooded ice in Vancouver and outperformed many NHL linesmen.

Roberto Luongo, a creature of habit, was out of his routine during Team Canada's golden day at the 2010 Winter Olympics. Henrik Sedin won the Art Ross and Hart Trophies not because he focused on shooting, but because of his attention to detail.

"The Franchise" Glen Hanlon proved the Canucks belonged in the same rink as the storied Montreal Canadiens. Harry Neale still has no idea why Jake Milford selected him to coach in Vancouver.

Ron Delorme's fists were behind one of the most infamous fights in team history and they only let up because of a gentlemen's agreement. John Garrett barely had time to let the paint dry on his mask before being thrust into the NHL All-Star Game.

Trevor Linden got a tearfully rousing sendoff after his final game, but he was crying long before the fans said goodbye. Gino Odjick kept one thing in mind on the only penalty shot attempt of his career: keep it simple, stupid.

This is just a taste of the 40 stories that fill the following pages and although the players, coaches

and management take centre stage, it goes without saying that there are no stories, no book, no Canucks as they are today without the fans.

In celebrating 40 years of Canucks hockey we're really paying tribute to you for your loyalty, passion and commitment to the team. Competing in the NHL is a rocky road at the best of times, but your rallying cheers that come when the team needs them most help smooth it out.

You make Canucks hockey unforgettable.

The rationale behind *Canucks at Forty* was simple: telling you something you don't know.

Here we go.



Vancouver supporters are never hesitant to wave their white towels in support of their beloved Canucks.



Tim Hortons

LINDEN  
16

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Above: Popular Canucks defenceman Harold Snepsts shows a young fan how to hold a hockey stick as part of community involvement.

Left: Young Canucks fans reach out to touch their hero after another three-star salute to Trevor Linden.

IF THERE'S ONE THING MISSING from *Canucks at Forty*, it's hockey clichés.

But you can't have a hockey book without clichés, so we thought we'd put them all in these acknowledgements.

Project lead Paul Dal Monte put the biscuit in the basket. His efforts, united with those of Mark Raham, Mike Hall and T.C. Carling, aka the

hardest working line in hockey, along with Chelsey Perrella, made this book what it is. Every story, every photo and every caption had the tall task of deking through this tight knit unit.

Authors Greg Douglas and Grant Kerr didn't pull any punches in getting to the heart of each story. The talented list of contributors they surrounded themselves with made for a formidable team, one never content to sit on a lead.

Copy-editor Stephanie Maniago and copy-editor/writer Derek Jory brought their A-game and gave 110 per cent.

The big three of Norm Jewison, Jim Robson and Gerry Sillers worked in unison as the historical conscience, standing up factual inaccuracies at the blueline. The collected wealth of knowledge shared between Jewison, Robson and Sillers took care of unforced errors, causing others to make adjustments. You were each an inspiration for this book. You put on a clinic out there.

If a picture is worth a thousand words then Jeff Vinnick and Bill Cunningham did a lot of the heavy lifting thanks to their epic frozen moments. When you put the puck on net, good things happen and this duo always knew when to shoot.

Pacific Newsgroup, Canadian Press and Getty Images came off the bench and really dazzled with their creativity. Each played between the whistles and took it one game at a time.



Towel power became a Vancouver staple in 1982 when the Canucks went to the Stanley Cup Final for the first time. The powerful tradition has never wavered through the decades of NHL hockey in Vancouver.

## Without the fans, none of this matters.

John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd., and specifically Karen Milner, really came through in the clutch. In gut check time they outlined the x's and o's and ensured the i's were dotted and t's crossed allowing everyone to elevate their game to another level.

Literary agent Robert Mackwood never got beat to loose pucks and proved to be the game

changer for a team that really hit its stride and played to its strengths.

We knew what we had to do and went out and did it. It was a total team effort made possible only because of you, the greatest fans in the world.

Without the fans, none of this matters.

—*The Vancouver Canucks*



The authors would like to thank the many hockey personalities who responded to our queries about the first 40 years of Vancouver Canucks history. We were received warmly and appreciate the thoughtful insights that we were allowed to share in our story telling.

A special thanks goes to our contributors who were approached to enhance this project. They are, in alphabetical order: Jim Hughson, *Hockey Night in Canada* play-by-play broadcaster;

Norm Jewison, long-time Canucks publicist; Ben Kuzma, *Vancouver Province* hockey journalist; Iain MacIntyre, *Vancouver Sun* sports columnist; Elliott Pap, *Vancouver Sun* hockey journalist; Garry Raible, Vancouver sports broadcaster; Don Taylor, Pacific Region Sportsnet host.

We would be remiss not to recognize Hockey Hall of Fame broadcaster Jim Robson, Vancouver's own walking hockey encyclopedia.

—Grant and Greg



Rogers Arena (formerly General Motors Place) opened in 1995 and provides hockey fans with incredible sight lines to view their favourite Canucks players in action.





# OCTOBER 9, 1970

## Historic hockey night in Vancouver

AS FAR AS THE NATIONAL TELEVISION audience tuned in to a special Friday night edition of *Hockey Night in Canada* was concerned, everything was going according to plan on October 9, 1970.

That was the historic night when Vancouver was officially welcomed to the National Hockey League, with the Canucks making their debut at the Pacific Coliseum against the Los Angeles Kings.

All appeared orderly and remarkably organized as Premier W.A.C. Bennett accompanied league president Clarence Campbell and Vancouver mayor Tom Campbell to centre ice, with the British Columbia Beefeater Band trumpeting the dignitaries' red carpet arrival.

But behind the scenes? Not so orderly and not so remarkably organized, at least in the life of Norman Robert (Bud) Poile, the Canucks' general manager. Juggling last-minute ticket requests and outrageous opening night favours from "friends" he hadn't heard from in years, Poile was desperately trying to escape from his office and join the official party in the board room where several NHL owners and governors had gathered.

As he stepped into the main lobby from his private quarters, Poile ran smack into Howie Young, who'd been waiting for his GM. "Why aren't I dressing tonight?" Young shouted in a loud and obnoxious voice. "I'm the most experienced defenceman you've got on the roster and you're



Above: Highest-priced Canucks seats on opening night at the Pacific Coliseum were \$6.50 for the NHL opener against the Los Angeles Kings.

Left: The elusive Stanley Cup is admired in 1970 by Canuck players (left to right) George Gardner, Rosaire Paiement, Ray Cullen and Pat Quinn.

allowing the coach to sit me out on opening night! What the hell's going on?"

Young had spent seven seasons in the NHL bouncing between the Detroit Red Wings and Chicago Blackhawks. Handsome and charismatic, but undisciplined on and off the ice, he had somehow found his way to the Los Angeles Blades of the Western Hockey League.

That's when Hollywood discovered him, resulting in an appearance in the 1965 war movie *None But the Brave*, starring Frank Sinatra.

Young was at the end of his hockey-playing days when Chicago transferred his rights to the expansion Canucks, who were willing to take any potential help they could get.

Poile settled Young down with the promise he'd be suiting up against the Toronto Maple Leafs two nights later. It would be one of 11 starts with Vancouver before Young was released.

Poile again pointed himself in the direction of the board room. In his path stood Chief Dan George, a proud member of the Coast Salish Nation who'd been invited as a special guest to take part in the opening night festivities. "Mr. Poile, I don't have credentials or a ticket to get into the game," the chief said. "Your switchboard lady asked me if I had a reservation. I told her, 'Of course ... the Burrard Reservation in North Vancouver where my people have been for years.' But she still won't let me into the building!"

Chief Dan George was also a movie star, having just completed the 1970 film *Little Big Man* with a young Dustin Hoffman.

Poile shook his head, rolled his eyes and apologized to the chief, inviting him to the board room for a shot of Scotch whisky.

Otherwise, the rest of the evening went well. Canada's singing sweetheart of the time, "Our Pet" Juliette, sang the national anthem, Mayor Campbell was lustily booed, Vancouver-born referee Lloyd Gilmour dropped the puck to get the game underway at 8:22 PDT and defenceman Barry Wilkins scored the Canucks' first-ever goal at 2:14 of the third period.

Jim Robson worked the *Hockey Night in Canada* play-by-play assignment with veteran Toronto broadcaster Jack Dennett as his colour commentator, while local talent Ted Reynolds, Bill Good, Jr., and Babe Pratt hosted the intermissions.

Montreal's Danny Gallivan called the game on radio with CKNW's Al Davidson working as his colour man. It was all a very strange combination of eastern and western broadcasters playing musical chairs, but it worked.

The only downside of the evening for the partisan sellout crowd was a 3-1 opening night loss.





The Canucks line up for a face-off in the Los Angeles zone during the first NHL regular-season game at the Pacific Coliseum as the anxious crowd anticipates Vancouver's first goal.



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