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## Vintage LaX Project: Snapshots of a lacrosse legacy

By Chris Halliday



Tim Prothero shows just some of the rolls of film left behind by his late father, David Prothero, taken from 1968 to 1985. Tim is in the middle of scanning and posting the images on Flickr.

Tim Prothero's basement in Orillia, Ont. serves as homage to many of Canada's most renowned lacrosse legends.

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Icons like Gaylord Powless, Jack Bionda, Jim Higgs, Wayne Goss, Johnny Davis, Bob and Jim Wasson, Cy Coombes, Barry Maruk, Larry Smeltzer, among dozens of others, reside there captured on 35 mm film, as seen in action through the camera lens of his late father, David Prothero, from 1968 to 1985.

Although the Prothero's never lived in Orangeville, the collection includes many photos of local lacrosse legends and others who have played an integral role in building and maintaining the sport in town, including Terry Sanderson, Shane Sanderson, Lindsay Sanderson, Tony Rose, Bob Clevely and many others.

An avid hobbyist, David would photograph Tim's games throughout his junior, senior and major lacrosse careers — not to mention whichever games the duo ventured to as fans.

"Wherever he went, it didn't matter if it was hockey, lacrosse, fishing or a friend's house, he always had his camera with him," Tim said. "He took a lot of pictures."

After suffering a serious stroke in 1990, David would never step foot in his dark room again.

However, before David died on May 22, Tim started preserving his father's photographs by scanning the negatives and posting them on Flickr.

"There was this whole photography side to him that not a lot of people knew about," Tim said of his father.

"Before he died, I told him 'Dad, you've got the history of lacrosse here. These were the pros of my youth that were the superstars. I think it is important people see them,' but he was never one to go out and do that."

In fact, David rarely sold any of his images, opting to simply give them away.

"Whenever we'd return for another game, he'd just drop a pile of 8 x 10s on the bench and say anybody who wants them can have them," Tim said. "He never asked for anything in return for them. He was like

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that with everything."

The dedicated son has uploaded about 3,200 of approximately 5,000 photo negatives he scanned into a gallery on Flickr, dubbed the Vintage LaX Project (www.flickr.com/photos/vintage\_lax).

The gallery, which is open to everyone, provides viewers with a visual walk through nearly 20 years of Canadian lacrosse history.

As it turns out, since Tim won a President's Cup at the senior level with the Owen Sound North Stars against Orangeville in 1980, David's photos even encapsulate several of the men responsible for building the Orangeville Northmen organization into what it is today.

"You can search by a name, team, division or whatever tag I choose to use," Tim said. "It also allows (people) to add comments or notes in Flickr, so anybody who wants to help identify (the players), please do so."

William Fitzpatrick, an executive member of Orangeville Northmen, was floored upon learning of David's vintage photos.

"People will be ecstatic, really impressed and glad that these photos have been preserved," Fitzpatrick said. "These are the superstars, the founders, the legends ... that we know really paved the way for everyone else.

"These people should be celebrated and definitely some of the photos should be added to the Hall of Fame."

Another interesting piece of lacrosse history lies in the fact several of those epitomized in David's photographs include the fathers of today's lacrosse stars. There are photos of John Grant Sr. (John Grant Jr.), Greg Williams (Shawn Williams), Ron Driscoll (Chris Driscoll), Terry Sanderson (Josh Sanderson), even Brian Jones (Orangeville Jr. A Northmen's Adam Jones) and "countless others that I'm not even aware of," Tim said.

The bottom line is these photos "need to be out there for people to enjoy," Tim said, so he'll continue to post them until the negatives run empty.

"Do I turn this into a money-making venture? I'm not interested in that right now," Tim said. "I'm more interested in getting them all done, sitting back and seeing what I have, what is important and what needs to be preserved."



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