

Hall of Fame Award

Athlete

Suzi Cooke (nee Suzette Smith)



Suzi grew up in Calgary attending Bishop Carroll High School and the University of Calgary. As a high school student she helped her team to the city championship and a provincial gold medal. Her play earned her a spot on the Alberta Provincial team, which earned silver and bronze medals during that time. Suzi's competitive attitude and dedication to improving, led her to be identified as one of the elite female athletes of

the time.

She played with the U of C Dino women for 2 years while playing for the Canadian Junior Women's National Team in the summer. Suzi was then invited to move to join the Senior National Team in Regina and competed in many international tournaments including the 1984 Olympic Games. An all round player, she, had a nickname of 'Keener', which totally described her efforts on the court. Her contributions to her team were in the training environment and on the court because of the 'keen' sense of drive and determination that she portrayed.

After 5 years with the National Team, Suzi played with the University of Winnipeg Wesmen, a team with an undefeated match record that season (55-0) culminating with the C.I.S Championship.

Suzi then transitioned to professional coaching. She served as the Alberta Summer Games Coach in 1987 and as head coach of the University of Alberta Pandas from 1986-91. She was named Canadian University Coach of the Year in 1988.

Suzi continued to play club volleyball until she embarked on medical school and residency, marriage and having two children. She returned to the game in 2005 by playing Master's Volleyball in the US Open Championships, winning gold on four occasions, silver three times, and one bronze. She also participated in the World Master's Games in 2013 in Torino, Italy where the Canada Master's Women's team won GOLD!

Suzi has made a tremendous impact as an athlete in the Alberta Volleyball arena, but believes in sharing her love of the game and her technical expertise with young athletes and has rejoined the coaching ranks. She began coaching with the Canuck Volleyball club in 2013-2014 and was named Volleyball Alberta 15U Women's Indoor Coach of the Year in 2014-2015.

Her continuum from an athlete to a coach serves as an excellent model to these young athletes. She is able to transfer the expertise she learned on the court to others who aspire to be athletic and take this first step in their young volleyball careers. Her playing and life accomplishments are evident in her leadership and she strives to instill the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed in volleyball in a manner that can be applied to any endeavor her players choose to follow.

Suzi is indeed a worthy inductee into the Volleyball Alberta Hall of Fame.