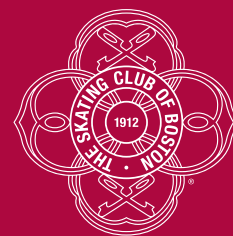


THE NEXT 100 YEARS, A CAMPAIGN FOR  
THE SKATING CLUB OF BOSTON



# The Richard T. Button Trophy Room

at The Skating Club of Boston





## The Richard T. Button Trophy Room

Dick Button is indisputably the most accomplished and transformative figure skater of the 20th century. He was just 18 years old when he won the first of his two Olympic gold medals. Before retiring from competition, he achieved an unbeaten winning streak that included five consecutive world championships, seven U.S. National titles, and four North American and European championships. Dick is the only man to win top honors in the Olympic, World, European, North American, and U.S. national competitions, and in 1948, he held all those titles simultaneously. It is fair to say that for five years – 1948 to 1952 – Dick dominated world figure skating.

The name Dick Button would also become synonymous with dazzling inventiveness. He was the first to successfully

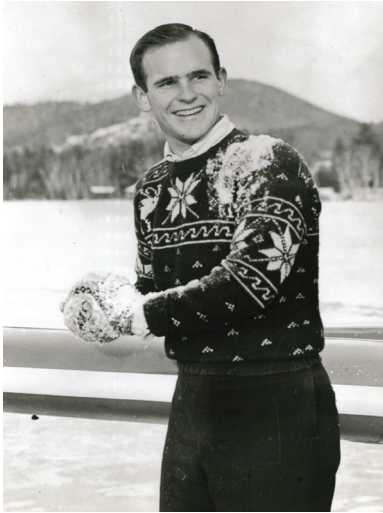
land both the double Axel jump and the first triple jump of any kind. He is also credited with inventing the flying camel spin, originally known as the “Button camel.”

The Skating Club of Boston takes great pride in establishing the Richard T. Button Trophy Room to honor his stunning accomplishments. It was on the Club’s rink on Soldiers Field Road in Boston that the reigning Olympic champion trained while a student at Harvard College. He had been training with his long-time coach Gustave Lussi on the triple loop, and he landed it for the first time in December 1951 on the ice at The Skating Club of Boston.

Following his competitive career, Dick enjoyed a 50-year career as a commentator with ABC’s Wide World of Sports. >>



*“His passion for figure skating and commitment to growing our sport has inspired me all my life.”*



With his signature candor and subtle observations, he interpreted performances by the greatest skaters of our age. In doing so, he became the trusted voice of figure skating, and educated millions of Americans about the sport and how to best understand and appreciate it. His excitement was contagious. His honesty and clever turn of a phrase, whether it be a compliment or a criticism, endeared him to the millions of Americans tuning in on Saturday afternoons.

He won the first-ever Emmy for “Outstanding Sports Personality—Analyst” and he was the first inductee into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame in the “Sports Analyst” category.

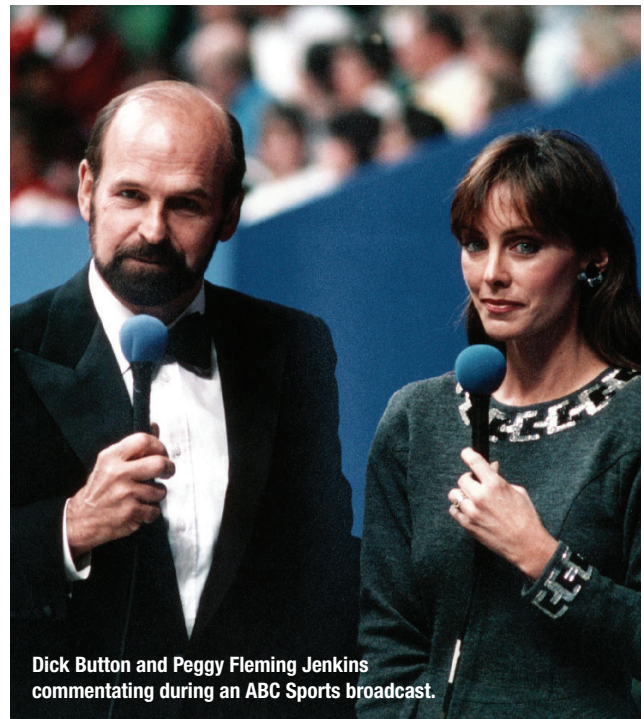
“Dick was the most influential voice in figure-skating history,” said Doug Wilson, the legendary producer and director of *Wide World of Sports*, who collaborated with Dick on countless broadcasts. “He knew what it was like to be in the role of champion – he had an iconic quality to him because of his victories. People listened to him because he knew how to win.”

Peggy Fleming Jenkins, World and Olympic champion, commented, “Dick and I collaborated as commentators for over 28 years on ABC Sports/ESPN and covered skating competitions around the globe. His strong personality could be a challenge at times. A good challenge! We had our views and expressed them in different ways. That’s what made it work so well. His passion for figure skating and commitment to growing our sport has inspired me all my life.”

Dick was also a pioneering producer in the sport, and through his company, Candid Productions, he created the World Professional Figure Skating Championships. The event quickly became the most sought-after invitation by

every elite, professional athlete in the world. Dick famously described the event with his typical candor: “In the amateur world, they count your triple jumps, and if you don’t do enough, they forget about your other skating. We do not make our competitors prove their merit. We let them present creative programs with as many or as few triple jumps as they wish.” His career in television broadcasting also led to the innovative and highly popular *Battle of the Network Stars*, airing on ABC from 1976 to 1988.

The Richard T. Button Trophy Room will honor, celebrate and perpetuate Dick Button’s legacy, a career that exemplifies the personal strengths that lead to longstanding success: passion, discipline, integrity and joy in the process. These qualities are fundamental to almost every champion. But they are not all that Dick had going for him. He had other attributes that are worth celebrating, such as a love of learning, qualities of humor and warmth, and a generosity of spirit to mentor and to educate. The Trophy Room will serve as a way of encouraging these positive qualities. >>



Dick Button and Peggy Fleming Jenkins  
commentating during an ABC Sports broadcast.

### The Inspiration of Legends

The Skating Club of Boston is now entering its second century of growth with an unprecedented expansion. The Richard T. Button Trophy Room will be at the heart of the Club's new home, a place not only to preserve Dick's unmatched story, but also where the Club will commemorate the long list of U.S. Figure Skating greats who have played significant roles in shaping the Club and the sport of figure skating we all enjoy today. The enduring impact and relevance of the Richard T. Button Trophy Room can best be summed up in one word: *Inspiration*.

Fellow Olympic Champion and long-time friend, Tenley Albright, recalls training at The Skating Club on the same ice as Dick. "You knew the minute Dick walked into the building that he was there. Even if you didn't see him, you just felt the energy in the rink change. It was upbeat and electrifying. Dick brought a natural joy and enthusiasm with him that shone throughout the rink. It was an immediate inspiration to skate on the same ice with him". To this day she also savors the exhilaration that came when, in 1952, she won her first U.S. women's championship, the same year Dick Button also defended his title as U.S. men's champion. "It was incredible to win that championship," said Tenley, "but it was

made even more incredible because my path had crossed with that of the legendary Dick Button."

"In sports, there is what we call the rolling effect of inspiration," said Paul George, a former U.S. Figure Skating champion and U.S. Olympic official. "Certainly, Dick inspired me – just as he had those who were senior to me, like Tenley Albright and David and Hayes Jenkins. He had the same kind of influence that Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus have had on golf."

The naming of the Trophy Room for such a skating icon, he said, "can show a young skater: You can do this. You can think about a new move you'd like to bring to the ice. It's a creative sport. He did it. You can do it too."

John Misha Petkevich, a national and North American champion, Olympian, and gold medalist at the World University Games in 1972, agrees. "Trophies obviously represent excellent accomplishments, but to me, they should serve as an inspiration to

all who see them," said Petkevich. "It's fitting to hold Dick Button up as a model for skaters with aspirational goals of their own," he added, "and that people know his accomplishments drew on the implicit joy he found in life. He loves to laugh; he has optimism. We can all learn by his example." >>

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Richard T. Button Trophy Room



Olympic and World Champions Dick Button and Tenley Albright acknowledge the crowd at the 2014 U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Boston.



### A Befitting Space for Legends

The Skating Club of Boston has long desired a space where it can preserve, display, and celebrate the trophies and medals of champions in a more sophisticated setting – a showcase that invites a deeper appreciation for what these artifacts mean and how they illuminate the sport's rich history.

The Club's collection, dating back to 1898, encompasses an impressive 400 trophies and medals that can now be shown to advantage in a spacious, light-filled room outfitted with many features, including multiple display cases and special accent lighting. It is located adjacent to the Club's library and the skaters' academic center. The Club envisions the combined spaces as a venue for receptions, special events, educational programs and rotating exhibitions. And the Trophy Room, in particular, will be a place that invites curiosity, wonder, and inspiration.

Photo  
by Laura  
Beach,  
courtesy  
Antiques  
and The  
Arts  
Weekly



Dick Button,  
proudly  
holding the  
Button-  
Salchow  
Trophy.

Visitors who appreciate exquisite craftsmanship will find plenty to admire. The collection includes Tiffany gold medals, European cut-glass crystal, and works by noted silver makers such as Reed and Barton and Fratelli Peruzzi. The Club is also the steward of a bronze statue sculpted by Leonard Craske, best known for the Fisherman's Memorial in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Medals made by New York jewelers Dieges and Clust – highly prized for their fine proportions of human figures – are featured prominently; they also made the spectacular bronze statue awarded to Maribel Vinson Owen by the Mayor of Boston for her success in the 1928 World Championships.

Like works of art, each piece makes personal the journey to excellence; each piece tells a story. Tenley Albright was the first American female skater to win an Olympic gold medal in 1956. That historic medal, and awards from her North American and World Championship victories, will be here. Some stories are part of a larger saga. The Club is home to the collection of Thomas M. Vinson, one of the first American figure-skating champions, and father of Maribel Vinson

Owen, nine-time national women's figure-skating champion, an accomplishment matched only by Michelle Kwan. Her two daughters, Maribel "junior" and Laurence, went on to become celebrated Olympic skaters. Sadly, Maribel and her daughters were among the U.S. Figure Skating team members tragically killed in the 1961 Sabena Flight 548 crash in Belgium while en route to the World Championships.

There is one trophy whose narrative continues to be written: the famous Button-Salchow trophy. The story began at the 1947 World Figure Skating Championship in Stockholm, where Dick's performance impressed Ulrich Salchow, ten-time winner of the World Figure Skating Championships and inventor of the now-famous Salchow jump. The judges awarded Dick second place, but Salchow thought he deserved the gold. Befriending the young talent, he invited Dick to select a trophy from his own vast collection, and as Dick did, a new tradition was born. Following the 1972 Olympics, Dick passed on the Salchow trophy to Misha Petkevich, and in 2010, Misha passed the trophy to Paul Wylie, the 1992 Olympic silver medalist, all in the spirit of commemorating a passion for excellence, generosity of mentorship, and a love of skating that now spans more than seven decades.

When the Button-Salchow Trophy was formally created in 2019 by Misha Petkevich, Paul Wylie and Paul George, with Dick's imprimatur, Misha said, "I insisted that his name be added to it, because Dick's the one who started the sequence of events that would lead to this becoming the equivalent of the Heisman Trophy in football." A committee has now been established within the United States Figure Skating Foundation to select future recipients of the trophy. In each year of the Olympic Winter games, the committee will determine who should receive the trophy for the previous quadrennial. Importantly, the Richard T. Button Trophy Room will be the new, permanent home for the Button-Salchow Trophy.

### An Invitation

We invite you now to not only honor Dick's legacy, but also to inspire future champions with a gift of support. Under its new roof, The Skating Club of Boston has set its sights clearly on the next 100 years, with plans to help redefine figure skating in the United States. What better way to shine a light on the road ahead than with the enduring legacy of Dick Button, whose athletic and creative skills will inspire generations to come in the new Richard T. Button Trophy Room. For more information, or to make a gift, please contact Club Executive Director, Doug Zeghibe at [douglas.zeghibe@scboston.org](mailto:douglas.zeghibe@scboston.org), or 617-782-5900.



## The Skating Club of Boston

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