



Hugh Town Memorial Builder Award Grace Morissette 2019



NOMINATION SUMMARY

Grace Morissette has a 30+ year legacy of selfless volunteer effort to paddling sports in general and outrigger canoe racing in particular. She has made contributions to support Canadian paddlers at the international, national, provincial, and club level. She has been part of the Lotus Sports Club that has organized the popular Lotus Iron, Lotus Icebreaker, Lotus Poker paddle, and Bill Alley Memorial Lotus Dragon Boat Regatta for many years. She has given freely of her time as a juniors and steering coach at Lotus Sports Club. She has served on the Lotus Executive and now the CORA Board.

HISTORICAL: SIGNIFICANT / EXEMPLARY CONTRIBUTIONS OVER TIME

The 2019 Lotus Iron event marked the 30th anniversary of Outrigger Canoe Racing in Canada. There are many names from that era such as Jim Mancell, Pete Liljedahl, Bill Alley, and Jim Bishop. **Grace Morissette** was paddling with Lotus Sports Club in Canada long before there were outrigger canoes in Canada – and she continues to provide continuity and a familiar face at paddling events to this day.

See the CORA website page for a snapshot of Canada's outrigger formative years: [01]

In 1989, the Lotus Sports Club organized Canada's first outrigger race, the Lotus Ironman Race, at Barnet Marine Park. Since this beginning, the sport of Outrigger Canoe Racing has grown in popularity across the Pacific northwest. Today's extensive list of Canadian outrigger races includes host clubs and competitors from across the country.

Grace has been with Lotus Sports Club to see the Lotus Iron reach 30 years. She has been part of the Lotus Icebreaker (the first outrigger double-hull event in Canada) for many years through challenging winter conditions, with a sell-out every year no matter the weather. The Jericho website has Race Results going back to 2000, but the Lotus IceBreaker had been going on for several years before that.

The Bill Alley Memorial Lotus Dragon Boat Regatta was introduced by **Grace** and Lotus to commemorate another memorable paddler who made exemplary contributions to paddling sports. [03]

Grace and Lotus introduced the innovative Lotus Poker Paddler in 2012 for Autumn outrigger canoe mid-distance racing and this event now sells out year-after-year.

Grace and Lotus have supported IVF World Sprints initiatives by hosting Lotus Sprints events (2000, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2008) and providing OC6s for the 2013 CORA Sprint Championships at Burnaby Lake prior to IVF Rio World Sprints 2014.

Go online and Google someone you know that paddles. You will usually find links and snippets of their race results. With **Grace** you will find mentions of other paddlers acknowledging **Grace**, or **Grace** taking the time to acknowledge those who go the extra mile.

Grace and the Lotus Sports Club paddlers - 2018 Kauai Summer OC1 clinic with Kai Bartlett and Keone Miyake

It was a true honour to be able to work with you and Kai. Thank you for everything you have done to make the clinic awesome. [04]

Dragon Boat friendships at Vancouver Festival run deep, hard and long

*While I was chatting with Andrew and Linda, somebody tried to surprise me with a kiss on the neck... but I flinched. Oops... it is **Grace Morissette**, my first dragon boat coach from the 1993 Headliners team when we won the inaugural Novice Cup. **Grace** is paddling with the Lotus Sports Club and they surprisingly won their first race of the day, pushing them into the Competitive Divisions. I give her a hug later... and also have a good chat with her husband Doug Mancell.*
[05]

CURRENT: SIGNIFICANT / EXEMPLARY CONTRIBUTIONS THIS YEAR

Grace has been with the Lotus Executive for more years than I can recall. She has been the Lotus Junior Coach as well as Race Director for Lotus Icebreaker and Lotus Iron and Lotus Poker Paddle forever.

Grace was nominated to the CORA Executive in 2018 and took responsibility for Memberships. She brought her vast experience as a Race Director to assist with the new Membership Database that has received rave reviews from CORA Sanctioned Event Race Directors seeking to reduce volunteer workload for Race Registration.

During the 12 year-run of the Big Chop, **Grace** would travel with a trailer of small boats from Burnaby to Burrard Marina for as many as possible of the 10 Summer Series Races to race OC2 with other small-boat paddlers to boost their confidence level in small-boat racing.

Grace and I had some time at the 2019 AGM to talk about the Lotus Junior program. As I understand it, the Lotus Junior program has a growing number of youths who have travelled a hard road and **Grace** is looking to do overnight paddling events that are not cost-prohibitive and do not involve crossing the Border. Overseeing a large group of youths on an away trip is a substantial task for someone with a full-time educational job and many other commitments.

SPECIFIC: SIGNIFICANT / EXEMPLARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADVANCEMENT OF THE SPORT

As if being Race Director for 3 hugely popular OC events, and Lotus Executive member, and Lotus Junior Coach, and CORA Board member was not enough, **Grace** has also played a part in the resurgence of Lotus Sports Club in the competitive racing arena. Many clubs go through up and down cycles where membership climbs with an increase in competitiveness, and then membership drops with a decrease in competitiveness.

Lotus Sports Club has fielded consistently strong Junior and Adult crews in the past years. As someone who attends many small boat races, the increased competitiveness from Lotus small boat racers has been very noticeable. Ken Asano and Tony Hodanic have consistently travelled the miles from BC to Oregon to place in the Top 3 in their divisions in the PNWORCA Winter Series for several years. I give credit to **Grace** for her participation in and support of small boat training / racing.

Some people learn to steer and some are naturals. **Grace** is a natural and she was the steering coach for our Lotus crew doing the Catalina Crossing the first-time way-back-when. She and I have crossed paths swimming with steering paddles between the lava shores at Honaunau and 100+ OC6s parked in the bay for the Queen's race. She is quite often steering for a men's crew at The Gorge and Seattle Change Race and who knows how many other races. She brings confidence to the crews she steers and demonstrates caution and sportsmanship and etiquette at crowded turns.

HUGH TOWN MEMORIAL BUILDER AWARD

The purpose of the **Hugh Town Memorial Builder Award** is to recognize volunteers who have made significant and exemplary contributions to the Outrigger Canoe Racing Discipline of Canadian Outrigger Racing Association (CORA) within Canada in the Builder Category.

<https://canadianoutrigger.ca/community-2/the-hugh-a-town-memorial-builder-award/>

REFERENCES

#	Note	Link
01	2019 Lotus Iron 30 Years	https://canadianoutrigger.ca/lotus-30th/
02	2000 Lotus Ice Breaker	http://www.jerichopaddling.com/races2000.html
03	2007 Bill Alley Memorial Lotus Dragon Boat Regatta	http://www.gunhaggis.com/2007/05/20/gung-haggis-dragon-boat-team-does-well-at-lotus-sports-bill-alley-memorial-dragon-boat-regatta/
04	2018 Kauai Summer OC1 clinic	https://kauaioutrigger.com/testimonials/
05	1993 Vancouver International Dragon Boat Festival	http://www.gunhaggis.com/category/dragon-boat-information/dragon-boat-with-todd-wong-dragon-boat-coach/page/9/