

Malton arena, park to be renamed after NHL-legend Paul Coffey

Paul King. COFFEY. Paul 4.

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He's raised the Stanley Cup over his head four times, but for Paul Coffey, having his name memorialized on the Malton Arena and Wildwood Park is one of the greatest honours of his life.

"To me, it means I did okay for myself. I was a good person and I'm proud of where I came from," said the 14-time National Hockey League (NHL) all-star.

Born in Weston, Ontario but raised in Malton, Coffey is considered one of the greatest defencemen to ever play the game.

A skilled playmaker with a booming shot and lightning-fast speed, Coffey embodied everything an offensive defenceman could be.

A three-time Norris trophy winner, Coffey appeared in 1,409 NHL games, scored 396 goals and amassed 1,531 points. Inducted into the

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Coffey calls renaming a huge honour

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Hockey Hall of Fame in 2004, the Mississauga legend attributes a great deal of his hockey success to his childhood years playing in Malton Arena.

"It was my home," reflected Coffey, who started playing hockey when he was just four years old.

Now the owner of a Kia car dealership in Bolton, Coffey recently drove by the arena and confessed he hoped it would someday bare his name.

In the presence of Coffey's family and friends, Mississauga City Council approved the renaming Wednesday morning.

"I wish my mom and dad (Betty and Jack) were here to see it happen," said a visibly emotional Cathy Coffey, Paul's sister.

"Malton represents before. It was before he was who everyone else knows him as. He was just my brother... we're very proud and overwhelmed by the response."

Coffey's best friend, Joe Iannelli, held back tears during his deputiation to council, describing Coffey as "a greater person than he is a hockey player."

When Coffey wasn't playing hockey or pleasure skating with his family on Fridays and Sundays on a man-made rink at Ridgewood Public School (maintained by his father, Jack), he was playing lacrosse, soccer and baseball in Wildwood Park.

And when he won his first Stanley Cup with the Edmonton Oilers in 1984, Paul celebrated with family and friends at

Paul Coffey speaks at the 2015 Canada Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony at the Ryerson's Mattamy Athletic Centre last October.
Photo by Andrew Francis Wallace



the Malton Community Centre.

"He's so proud to be from Malton... he deserves the recognition," said Iannelli.

Ward 5 councillor Carolyn Parrish said she hopes the re-naming of both the arena and Wildwood Park is the catalyst for rebuilding the village. In addition to the re-naming, the 48-year-old arena is getting a major face-lift, which includes historical murals on two walls and new signage for both the park and the arena.

But no matter what finishing touches are put on the arena, Coffey said he will never forget how important it was to his childhood and future development.

"I remember putting on that blue and white and red jersey, playing for the Malton Minor Hockey Association... To have the arena named after me is a huge honour."

"I've had a lot of nice things happen to me," said Coffey, referencing the Edmonton Oilers retiring his jersey and his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame, "but this is one of the best."

"Paul's recognition as a Mississauga son has been long overdue. Re-naming the Malton Arena the Paul Coffey Arena only makes sense - it's where he grew up playing hockey and lacrosse and where hundreds of kids since have dreamed of becoming the next Paul Coffey," said Mike McCarthy, long-time friend of Coffey and president of MHI Canada Aerospace Inc., also located in Malton.

Coffey was drafted sixth overall by the Edmonton Oilers and led the team to three Stanley Cups in the 1980s. He won his last Stanley Cup with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1990-91 and played on seven teams thereafter, ending his career in 2001 with the Boston Bruins.