

Laumann honored

Peel Biog. bk. Dec. 20-91 MS

Mississauga's Silken Laumann has come a long way in the past two years.

Considered one of the world's finest athletes, the 27-year-old finally received equal recognition at home when she joined the likes of Wayne Gretzky, Ben Johnson and Bobby Orr as the 1991 recipient of the Lou Marsh Trophy.

The award, first handed out in 1936, is rewarded annually to Canada's outstanding athlete.

And Laumann certainly beat out some tremendous stars who had spectacular performances this past calendar year to win the award.

Among the athletes nominated were Canadian and world figure skating champion Kurt Browning, decathlete Michael Smith and hockey stars Eric Lindros and Ed Belfour.

Laumann, who won rowing's two most prestigious events in 1991, said she was thrilled by the announcement.

"I'm shocked," she told reporters. "I mean I had a feeling I'd be nominated but I never thought I'd win."

"For me to win is, well I just can't tell you how glad I am, especially as a woman and as a rower — we just don't get the recognition other athletes do. I have a lot of respect for the athletes (nominated) and I am really honored."

The former Lorne Park Secondary School student won the single sculls gold medal at the world championships in Vienna last August, a month after winning the all-around World Cup crown, which consisted of a six-event series finishing in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Laumann will receive the award at the Conn Smythe Sports Celebrities Dinner at the Metro Convention Centre on February 6.

After being named Ontario's and Mississauga's top female athlete in 1990, Laumann appears a shoo-in to duplicate such honors for 1991.