

# NWO Sports Hall of Fame

...by Diane Imrie, Executive Director



## *Honoured Member – Kathy Kangas*



The weather outside is lovely for this time of year (at least it is as I am writing this article) and I am starting to think that maybe the winter will be a short one and I will be on the golf course in no time at all. It never hurts to think positively about a good outcome.

One of the people that I have spent a good deal of time on the golf course with had to have a positive attitude when she participated in her sport as one wrong move and she could have found herself in some trouble, and not the kind that you can easily get yourself out of.

I am talking about Hall of Fame Honoured Member Kathy Kangas who holds the distinction of being the only person inducted into the Northwest Ontario Sports Hall of Fame for the sport of parachuting. It all began in 1969 when Kathy took what was to be her first of many parachute jumps, going on to serve as a member of the National Skydiving Team from 1970-85. During her lengthy career, this outstanding athlete earned a number of records and titles at the national and international level.

Competing in 15 national championships, she placed in the top five consistently, claiming the Canadian National Parachuting Accuracy title a total of four times, doing so in 1971, '81, '82 and '83.

At the 1981 World Invitational Parachuting Championships, held in Canton, China, she earned a bronze medal in Women's Accuracy. She also represented Canada at eight world championships between 1970 and 1984. At the 1982 World Championships she was the top scorer on the Canadian Women's team which won the silver medal in Women's Accuracy in the Team Event, the first ever by a women's team from Canada.

In 1984, Kathy became the first Canadian woman to reach 3,000 freefall parachute jumps, earning her the "Double Diamond Wings." At the time of her retirement, Kathy also held the records for the most parachute jumps by a Canadian woman at 3,197, the most years on the national team with 15, and the Canadian Women's Accuracy record of five dead-centre jumps.

Kathy did not just limit her exceptional talents to the sport of skydiving. She was also very active as an all-round athlete, excelling in a number of sports while growing up in Port Arthur and while attending university. In 1967, she was named the University of Western Ontario's Female Athlete of the Year.

Receiving her Master of Science degree in exercise physiology from the University of Illinois in 1968, she served as a professor of physical education at Lakehead University and at Buffalo State where she coached one of her students to the U.S. National Gymnastics title.

Other honours bestowed upon this exceptional athlete have included being named Thunder Bay's Female Athlete of the Year for 1970, receiving an Outstanding Citizen's Award from the City of Thunder Bay in 1981, an Ontario Sports Achievement Award in 1983 and induction into the Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame in 1989.

I can also attest to the fact that Kathy is a very good golfer! Happy holidays everyone. See you in 2013!

*Diane Imrie is the Executive Director of the NWO Sports Hall of Fame. It is located at 219 South May Street and is open Tuesday to Saturday 12:00 to 5:00*