

who inspires you?



A Wheelchair is Not a Handicap

Eugene Reimer



Eugene Reimer's significant contributions to sports and to athletes with a disability are unparalleled. An inspiration to thousands of disabled individuals: Eugene has proven that a wheelchair is not a handicap, but rather, an opportunity for athletic achievement.

Following a childhood bout with polio, the long time Abbotsford resident was left with only minimal use of his legs. In the 1960's, however, when wheelchair sports were in their infancy, Eugene took sports with a passion. He excelled in a wide variety of games, including weightlifting, archery, swimming, basketball, volleyball, and track and field events. Eugene quickly became one of the Province's top all-around athletes.

From 1968, until his retirement from sports in 1980, Eugene amassed over 50 national and 22 international medals, 10 of which were Olympic! He participated and excelled in prestigious world events, such as the International Paralympics and the PanAm Wheelchair Games.

In 1972, Eugene set New World records at the Paralympic Games in Heidelberg, Germany, by taking gold medals in both discus and pentathlon and a silver medal for the 4 x 60 m relay.

Eugene was named "Canadian Outstanding Male Athlete of the Year" in 1972, the first time that such a level of recognition had been awarded to an athlete with a disability. In 1974, he was awarded the Order of Canada medal for his "inspiring example to the handicapped". In 1991, the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame and Museum presented Eugene with the W.A.C. Bennett Award, in recognition of his special contribution to the Province of B.C.

In 2000, Eugene was inducted into the Terry Fox Hall of Fame. Later that same year the Eugene Reimer Award was established. This award is presented annually and recognizes a British Columbian, who makes an outstanding contribution in the field of sport, recreation, or physical education for persons with disabilities. Abbotsford's own Eugene Reimer was honored as the inaugural recipient. On May 2nd, 2002, Eugene was inducted into the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame.

A valued ambassador for people with physical disabilities, Mr. Reimer Chaired the 2002 B.C. Disability Games held in Abbotsford that summer.

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The Eugene Reimer Middle School opened on September 3, 2002, and is located on Townline Road just south of Rick Hanson Secondary School. It will initially serve 600 students in Grade 6 through 8. Eugene Reimer attended the official opening of the school that fall.

In nominating Mr. Reimer for this honor, renowned British Columbian, Rick Hansen notes "Eugene was an incredible inspiration to me as a young athlete and he continues to inspire all who know him and/or his story." School Board Chairman, John Smith, adds, "Eugene Reimer is a highly distinguished Abbotsford Native whose courage, dedication and many achievements are an excellent model for the youth of our community, and particularly those attending the school that will bear his name."

On June 13, 2003, at the Convocation 2003 Ceremonies of the University College of the Fraser Valley, Eugene Reimer was selected as the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree. This degree is the highest form of recognition given by the University College of the Fraser Valley. On July 22, 2003, the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International presented Eugene Reimer with its highest form of recognition to a Canadian – The 'Paul Harris Fellow' Award.

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