

Ken 'Jiggs' McDonald

Nov. 28, 1938 –

Born in Galt, Emmy award-winning broadcaster Ken "Jiggs" McDonald got his start as an announcer early. A resident of Ayr who attended Galt Collegiate from 1952-1956, the teenaged Jiggs took part in a weekly GCI program, served as a goal judge, and enthusiastically took up P.A. announcing. If he couldn't be a hockey player, he at least wanted to be part of hockey. So it was natural for him to also become a cub sportswriter for the Galt Reporter.

McDonald's professional broadcasting career began in 1956 at Lindsay, Ontario. A couple of years later he accepted a position as sports and program director of radio station CFOR in Orillia, Ontario (1958 to 1967).

Thirty-seven years would come and go before the highly respected McDonald finally decided to hang up his headset and close out his Hall of Fame career behind the microphone.

His final game came on St. Patrick's Day with McDonald's Florida Panthers taking on his former team, the New York Islanders. The jovial Jiggs stepped back into the television booth as Fox Sports Net paid tribute to his stellar career.

McDonald, who closed out his career after a five-year stint as the radio voice of the Panthers, called the action as the Panthers put together a thrilling come-from-behind 6-4 victory against the eighth-place Islanders. He was joined in the booth by his former SportsChannel partner from his Islanders days, Ed Westfall, and Islanders' Hall of Fame defenseman and Panthers television analyst Denis Potvin.

Throughout the night, he was visited by old friends and former colleagues like Panthers alternate governor and former Islanders president Bill Torrey, who hired Jiggs with the Islanders in 1980.

When expansion doubled the "Original Six" in 1967, Jiggs joined the upstart Los Angeles Kings on their broadcast team and stayed in LA until 1972. He moved on to become the voice of the Atlanta Flames until 1980, when Torrey brought him to the Islanders, where he spent 15 years of his career and called three of the Islander's four Stanley Cup Championships.

Those championship seasons were among the highlights of his career.

In 1995 McDonald returned to Ontario to partner with former Galt Terrier star Harry Neale as the radio broadcast team for the Toronto Maple Leafs.

McDonald closed out his career in Florida. That final game, with some old friends around, was also a highlight. It was certainly the end of an era.

"I was thrilled when I heard about our plans to have Hall of Fame broadcaster Jiggs McDonald joining me in the television booth with the Islanders in town," said Potvin, a Fox Sports Net's Panthers Hockey color analyst. "We spent a lot of time working together in New York, and I have many, many fond memories from those days. I think there will likely be as many Islanders fans, as well as Panther fans, who will be sorry to see him go. He's been a true professional and an exceptional person to work with."

McDonald received national recognition in 1990 when he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame and won the Foster Hewitt Memorial award, which honors members of the radio and television industry. McDonald has called more than 3,000 regular season games - it's regarded as an all-time record - as well as 200-plus playoff contests and received two Emmy Awards throughout his career.

"Jiggs is one of the most talented announcers in the history of the sport, and it has been my distinct pleasure working with him for the past five years. He will be sorely missed by me personally and by the entire organization," said Randy Moller, Florida Panthers Director of Broadcasting and Community Development and WQAM game analyst.

Widely regarded as being one of hockey's top broadcasters, McDonald's talent carried him to the heights of his profession. He was the voice of Sports Channel



Ken 'Jiggs' McDonald in the broadcast booth for his last game, above, and left, with former Toronto Maple Leaf GM Bill Watters.



America, broadcasting 11 consecutive Stanley Cup Final Series from 1984-1995.

He was also selected to broadcast ice hockey at the Olympic Games in Calgary (1988), Albertville, France (1992) and Lillehammer, Norway (1994). For CTV, he even called the play by play for Olympic basketball in Barcelona (1992).

In 2003, he was inducted into GCI's Stairway of Excellence. In November of that same year he broadcast his 3000th NHL game. All told, he has broadcast from at least 67 different arenas around the world.

Among those whom Jiggs worked the broadcast booth with in Atlanta was former star Bernie Boom Boom Geoffrion: Senior Sports Illustrated writer referred to Jiggs as "the splendid." But he couldn't praise Geoffrion.

Geoffrion said: "Jiggs, there are only three things to hockey: shooting and skating."

"Right, Boomer," said Jiggs. "And what's the third?"

The exasperated Geoffrion replied, "Jiggs, that's the three. Shooting. And. Skating."

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