

2024 Lynda Garland Award Announced

July 12, 2024 - The Lynda Garland "Award for Excellence" was presented for the fourteenth time at the Canadian Baton Twirling Winner/Championship in Oshawa, Ontario. The recipient of Lynda Garland's "Award for Excellence" was Kim Genton of Ontario.

At the 2008 Canadian Championships in Moncton, NB, the CBTF recognized Lynda Garland's years of service to baton twirling in Canada and around the world by creating the award that bears her name. Among Ms. Garland's many accomplishments, she was one of the founders of the Twirl Canada organization and was its first President from 1979 through 1983. Twirl Canada went on to become the [Canadian Baton Twirling Federation](#) [1] (CBTF), which was a charter member of the [World Baton Twirling Federation](#) [2](WBTF) when it was formed. Lynda served as President of the World Baton Twirling Federation between 1983 and 2008.

Ms. Garland established the criteria for the new award. The Lynda Garland "Award For Excellence" is presented to a Canadian Baton Twirling Federation (CBTF) Coach who has made long-term contributions to the sport of Baton Twirling.

In presenting the award, Ms. Garland touched on the many highlights of Mrs. Genton's career:

Kim Genton has been involved in baton twirling for over 50 years. She and her family moved from the Province of Quebec to Burlington when she was 5 years old. Kim started twirling at the age of 8. During her ballet class she couldn't help but be distracted by Sandra Watt's Baton class next door. The sparkle of the baton caught Kim's eye right from the beginning. Sandra Watt (Honorary Member of the Canadian Baton Twirling Federation) was Kim's first coach. Kim competed in many National Baton Twirling Association competitions. When Kim stopped competing, she began coaching right away and formed her first club she called "Kim's Kittens", now known as Pizzazz Baton and Dance.

Before Canada formed the Canadian Baton Twirling Federation, the Ontario Baton Twirling Association was a member of the NBTA. Kim was President of OBTA for several years. One of Kim's fondest memories was training with Betty Feist Lynes for the American Youth On Parade competition. Such a proud moment it was when her group won the very prestigious "Little Brown Jug" at AYOP. Hearing the Canadian anthem playing for her group is a lifetime memory that Kim will always remember as a proud Canadian coach.

Kim has coached many athletes to great success, whether it be achieving a personal best, or competing locally, provincially, nationally, and at the world level. Some of her past students include Rachel Bower, Jennie Smith, and Shasta Gillies Taylor. Her first student was Rachel Bower, Rachel taught her many things; the pleasure of coaching as well as the tremendous responsibility coaching requires. Kim's athletes have participated in the World Baton Twirling Championships and the International Cup for the following years – 2005, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019, taking a break due to the COVID epidemic.

- One of Kim's highest achievements was having the world team she shared with now deceased Nancy Beachin, win the bronze medal at the World Baton Twirling Championships in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1997.
- In 2006 Kim coached Team Trillium who represented Canada at the World Baton Twirling Championships in Rome, Italy.
- She was also the coach of the Canadian Team "Heart and Soul" which won the gold medal at the International Cup Championships in Hamilton, Ontario in 2007.
- Under her guidance, Team Alliance represented Canada at the World Championships in Bergen,

Norway, in 2010.

- She has subsequently coached athletes in both individual and team events that have represented Canada in international competitions in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2022, and 2023; winning numerous bronze, silver and gold medals.

Kim offers a recreational and competitive program within her club as well as a program called Team Infinity. Coaches Catherine Lemyre, Sarah Weir and Heather Catton's loyalty to Kim allows the Pizzazz program to continue even with Kim and Amy at a distance. Team Infinity is an opportunity for the young athletes in Ontario to come together and work outside of their own club. This year's group of 19, is made up of four clubs and taught by four coaches.

Kim loves to work on projects that enrich the lives of others. Her camp Muskoka is becoming internationally known with an excellent attendance from Canadian and American athletes. It's quite remarkable that Kim's family has lived in South Africa, Australia, Hong Kong, Chicago and now Florida and never has her passion changed for the sport of baton twirling in Canada and the wonderful friends she has made along the way. Kim attributes a lot of her happiness to the special moments she has shared with her daughter Amy Kalin.

In 2022, Elsie Post, a Pizzazz Baton Club athlete competed as Canada's gold medalist in the youth division at the World Baton Twirling Championships which were held in Turin, Italy. Elsie placed 12th, which was an excellent accomplishment. Elsie continues to train in Burlington.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

On July 7, 2010, at the Canadian Baton Twirling Championships in Toronto, Kim was honored with the CBTF Lifetime Achievement Award.

As a Level 4 CBTF coach since 1982 and an experienced master judge Kim continues to shape the sport. Her involvement in creating the CBTF's Badge Program, now known as the Skills Development Program, has been instrumental in advancing baton twirling in Canada.

Kim has organized countless local, provincial, and national competitions.

Kim played a pivotal role in the organization of the 2007 World Baton Twirling Championships, held in Hamilton, Ontario. At the 2015 WBTF International Cup Championships, held in Abbotsford, British Columbia, hosted by CBTF, Kim managed the merchandise, accommodation and opening and closing ceremonies.

In 2023, Kim was elected as the Judges Representative on the CBTF Board of Directors.

Also in 2023, Kim was selected, as one of the judges to judge the 2023 IBTF Nations Cup/World Baton Twirling Championships in Liverpool, United Kingdom and most recently, Kim will be judging in Helsingborg, Sweden, in August at the 2024 International Baton Twirling Federation and the World Baton Twirling Federation's World Freestyle and Rhythmic Twirl Championships.

Kim now lives in Florida, however, her steadfast commitment to Burlington and her baton club remains unwavering. Her regular visits to Burlington for coaching demonstrate her dedication to her athletes and the community. Kim's parents and family remain in Burlington and are also heavily invested in Kim's Club.

Kim Genton's life's work in baton twirling, marked by significant achievements, exceptional dedication, and a positive impact on countless athletes, makes her an inspiration for future generations.

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