

Lamont joins trapshooting Hall of Fame

BY PERRY BERGSON

While Pat Lamont looked at times like he would rather have been anywhere other than the Brandon Gun Club's clubhouse on Saturday evening, it was exactly the spot he needed to be.

The 37-year-old Brandon trapshooter, who is a generational talent in the sport, was inducted into the Canadian Trapshooting Association's Hall of Fame during a special ceremony after that day's action at the national championships was over.

"Having it in Brandon was perfect," Lamont said. "Having started shooting here, I guess it came full circle. There couldn't be a more perfect place for it to happen."

The Hall of Fame, which was started in 2022, has categories for shooters and for the contributors who helped build the sport. A committee of three shooters that included Melanie Gordon of Brandon evaluated the applications from across the country and settled on Lamont, trapshooting legend Susan Nattrass and one builder, the late Harry Humby of Winnipeg.

Last year's class was composed entirely of deceased pioneers of the sport, and with Nattrass away in Italy and unable to make it to Brandon, Lamont remains the only shooter to be present for the induction.

While Lamont recognized his mother Kathy and sister Jen during his remarks, he was emotional when he spoke directly to his father Rob.

"If it weren't for you, this wouldn't be possible," Lamont told the crowd. "Without your coaching, talking or just being there to shoot with, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Rob Lamont introduced his son to the sport when Pat was a youngster, and is a little blown away by how far he's come.

"When you think of where we started, he was the little kid standing right behind the trap," Rob Lamont said. "He put the shells on the trap and would stand right behind it and we would throw straight-aways and he would shoot five or six or seven targets and said 'That's enough Dad.'"

It turned out the recoil of the gun was making him sore, but it was something he got accustomed to pretty quickly. He won the provincial junior program, which is for shooters up to 18, for the first time when he was 12, and repeated the feat when he was 13, 14 and 15.

By the time he was 16, he moved up to the men's division and won a provincial title there, duplicating the feat when he was 17 and 18.

"He's been a very good shooter right from the get-go," Rob Lamont said. "The gun he is currently using he got when he was 16 years old and he basically hasn't changed anything with it over 20 years and he's won everything that you can with it."

Rob Lamont, who is a terrific shooter too, said Pat has an extra element that separates him from most people. It's simply the willing-



Patrick Lamont smiles at his family during a brief speech after being inducted into the Canadian Trapshooting Association Hall of Fame on Saturday evening at the Brandon Gun Club. The honour came during the CTA's annual national championships. (Photos by Perry Bergson/The Brandon Sun)

ness to stay in the moment and concentrate on the clay target, which is also referred to as the bird.

"He's got the ability to shoot through things like a thought," Rob Lamont said. "He'll stop and regroup. When he calls for the target, he's ready for that target. He's not thinking about 'Gee, a bird flew by' or 'I wonder what's going on in the clubhouse' or 'That kid down there, did they miss calling that bird.'"

"He's got the ability to put 100 per cent of his concentration on what there is at hand, the next bird."

It's difficult to put into context for non-trapshooters just how good Lamont is.

Canadian Trapshooting Association president Andrea Bassan doesn't take long to come up with a comparison.

"If you're not a trapshooter and you're following other sports, Pat Lamont is probably the equivalent of Tiger Woods," Bassan said. "He's a superb athlete. Pat does well consistently at every shoot he goes to."

"He's a Canadian champion, he's a North American champion, he

wins day in and day out and seldom misses a target. Shooting 100 out of 100 is difficult, and he does it regularly and routinely."

Lamont won the top awards at last week's national championships, earning the high overall for hitting the most of the 1,000 shots taken by competitors between Thursday and Sunday, and also the high all around for hitting the most of the 400 taken during the championship rounds on Saturday and Sunday.

He also won three other events, and now has dozens of national titles.

Still, he was thrilled to be inducted.

"It's an honour," Lamont said. "To get recognized by fellow shooters and put into the Hall of Fame is a big honour. It feels great."

In her introduction prior to calling him up, CTA secretary Emily Brown, who was also a member of the nomination committee, said his shooting success is just a small part of who Lamont really is.

"The numbers mean a lot but the person that is represented be-

hind those numbers is what really counts," Brown told the crowd prior to calling Lamont up. "Pat represents the next generation of exceptional trap shooters to make his mark and make Canada proud. He is so deserving of this honour, and is such an honourable, humble, wonderful young man."

If there's a more decorated shooter in Canada than Lamont, it has to be Nattrass.

While she couldn't be in Brandon, she recorded a two-minute video to thank the organization for including her.

"I'm very honoured and I will cherish this moment for the rest of my life," she said.

She attended her first national championship in 1960 when she was nine, because her family followed her father Floyd to an event in Hamilton. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame last year.

"Canadian championships have always been very important to me and to my family," Nattrass said in the video. "The biggest event in my career when I started shooting was

in 1968 when I won the Canadian handicap championship against everyone. For a 17-year-old girl to beat all the guys and the gals at 17 was really a big event and sort of started my career."

Nattrass shot at six Olympic Games between 1976 and 2008, won seven women's world championships, took gold at the Pan American Games and medalled at the Commonwealth Games, earned the Lou Marsh Trophy as Canadian athlete of the year and was made an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Pat Lamont said it was nice to be inducted at the same time she was. While her best shooting came before Lamont started, he understands her place in the sport.

"I've read about her, I've spoke to her, a great lady and a great competitor," Lamont said. "To go in with her means a lot."

Meanwhile, Humby, who died at age 79 last November, was represented at the event by his wife of 53 years, Francie. After taking up the sport at 65, he was president of the Manitoba Trapshooting Association for two years and president of the Winnipeg Trap and Skeet Club for three years.

He was inducted into the Manitoba Trapshooting Hall of Honour on Aug. 20, 2022 after winning more than 150 prizes provincially, nationally and internationally.

"Harry was a familiar face to many in this room," an emotional Brown told the crowd. "He loved trapshooting and he loved the many people he met in the sport. His beaming smile reflected the joy he carried with him in all the things he did."

"At any shoot, Harry could be seen with his beloved Francie, walking together to the trap or sitting together holding hands while watching the shoot."

Remarkably, it won't be the last Hall of Fame ceremony Lamont attends this summer.

He's also being inducted into the American Trapshooting Association's Hall of Fame on Aug. 8 when he heads down to Sparta, Ill., for the Grand American World Trapshooting Championships.

He has 10 titles in the largest shooting event in the world, third most among living shooters and in the top half dozen overall since it started in 1900.

In 2017, the Brandonite won the high overall and the high all around title, giving him career championships in all five events. He was just the second person in history to accomplish the feat.

After missing 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, he returned last year to add to his collection of rings.

"That shoot is almost 20 times as big as this one, with a lot tougher competitors," Lamont said. "I'm looking forward to it. It will be a special year down there, and going into the Hall of Fame just adds a component to the shoot."

"Hopefully I can get that out of the way and just focus on shooting."

» pbergson@brandonsun.com
» Twitter: @PerryBergson



LEFT: The Lamonts, son Patrick, left, and father Rob, walk to where they're shooting on Sunday afternoon during the Canadian Trapshooting Association's national championships at the Brandon Gun Club. The pair were able to share an emotional moment on Saturday evening when Patrick was inducted into the CTA Hall of Fame. RIGHT: Pat Lamont shoots during the national event.