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PARTNERSHIP & DEVOTION

CANADA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL ICE DANCE TEAM EVER BALANCES DEDICATION TO ART, ATHLETICISM, AMBITION—AND EACH OTHER.

2018 Canada's Walk of Fame Inductees: Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir

> **"There are no short cuts to success. Dream big, work hard and do not let anything or anyone get in the way of what you want to achieve."**
> **- Scott Moir**

Canadian ice dancers Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir began the 2017/18 skating season with their sights set on the Pyeongchang Olympics. They'd been training together for 20 years, since Virtue was seven and Moir was nine. Although already decorated with Olympic gold and silver medals from the Vancouver and Sochi games, along with numerous World Championship, Four Continents and Grand Prix medals, they were determined to stage a comeback by blending everything they'd learned along their way into their own gold medal formula.

Canadians, and the entire world, cheered them to the top of the podium.

The pair trained in the U.S. for Sochi, with Russian coaches. This time they worked with Canadian coaches and B2ten, a training support organization, in Montreal. "It was so special to have our training base in Canada the past two years," says Moir. "The support we received on a daily basis and having that sense of being home made our comeback even more special."

This time around, their training was also more scientific, with regular physio and massage therapy, osteopathy, mental coaching and nutrition sessions with specialists who all communicated together. It also included a daily rest break. "Skating can be somewhat archaic in the way that people train. It's usually the more hours the better," Virtue says. "We changed the way we approach our practices."

After training in a British style of skating technique growing up, followed by ten years of coaching in the Russian style, the pair were ready to integrate everything they knew. "We were taking elements from each and every coach we've ever worked with and creating our own formula," Virtue says.

To connect with audiences and fulfil the artistry required of the sport, they found a winning way to tell a story—in just four minutes of ice time. "We tried to bring people in and draw them into our world," Virtue says. "That's the beauty of ice dance, it's finding that balance between the technical proficiency and the artistry."

Virtue and Moir's training required them to lead diligent and regimented lives dedicated to their sport—and to each other. "There are no short cuts to success," Moir says. He says to succeed, skaters must "dream big, work hard and not let anything or anyone get in the way of what you want to achieve."

The two grew up together, at first skating for fun in London, Ontario. But after some early success, they started training seriously. Their parents used to wake up at 4:15 a.m. to drive them to the rink so they could skate for two hours before school. By high school they were living on their own in Waterloo, training to be the best juniors in Ontario, then the best in Canada.

Throughout their years of training and competitive wins, Virtue and Moir remained ever grateful for the support of Canadians. "You can really feel the encouragement and emotional support," Virtue says. "And there's such pride that comes with representing your country. We're always careful to take a moment to appreciate what it means to represent a country that stands for inclusion, fairness and diversity."

Moir describes their induction into Canada's Walk of Fame as "one of the greatest honours of our career. It's a very similar feeling to when we were asked to carry the flag into the opening ceremony in Pyeongchang."

In gratitude for years of support, Virtue and Moir co-produced a memorable Thank You Canada tour for fall 2018, taking them across the country and into smaller venues, such as Abbotsford and Red Deer, so they could perform for as many Canadians as possible.

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Photo credit: Myra Klarman