

Q&A // BRUCE BENNETT



GETTY IMAGES

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GETTY IMAGES' DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY, HOCKEY IMAGERY DISCUSSES RECEIVING HIS U.S. HOCKEY HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CALL, BEING RECOGNIZED FOR WHAT HE DOES, HOW HE GOT STARTED WITH THN AND HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO HIS CAREER, WHAT HIS CURRENT JOB ENTAILS AND HOW PEOPLE REACT TO HIS WORK

WITH W. GRAEME ROUSTAN

W. GRAEME ROUSTAN: We're here today in St. Paul, Minn., for the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremony, for which Bruce Bennett is an inductee. Congratulations.

BRUCE BENNETT: Thank you.

WGR: I just couldn't imagine what it would feel like. Maybe

you want to talk a little bit about when you got the phone call. What was that like?

BB: It was Pat Kelleher who called me. I was kind of emotionless. I didn't know what to say. I've dreamed about it in the past, but I take it game by game, and I enjoy what I do. You don't think about the reward at the

end of the rainbow after you've shot 6,000 games. It was a good time to look back at my career and the things I've done. I could actually be happy for a change because, usually after a game, I'm not happy. I'm a grumpy guy for those shots that I've missed. So it's kind of a surreal moment when I got that call.

WGR: It must be such an amazing feeling that you've been recognized for your great career and how good you are at what you do. Let's face it, there are a thousand photographers that cover hockey, but you're the pinnacle.

BB: Thank you. You just don't think of it day in and day out. Every game stands on its own. Like a coach would say, "Every period is important, and every minute is important. You win the minute. You win the period. You win the game." So when you're out there and you're shooting, you're just trying to be the best you can and stay focused, pun intended I guess. Don't let any distractions get in your way, and produce the best images you can every night. And the joy, besides seeing pictures in print like in The

Hockey News, is creating something that fans will look at and go, "Wow, that guy actually got that shot. I saw it on TV. I can't believe somebody got a still photo of that."

WGR: You brought up The Hockey News. Everybody at The Hockey News knows who you are and how important you've been to THN. Why don't you talk about your first call or your first assignment with THN? When was it? What was it about?

BB: I can't forget it. It was during the 1973-74 season. I shot a few pictures as a naive 18-year-old kid from the blue seats at Madison Square Garden and from warmups at an Islanders game. I made some horrendous five-by-seven black-and-white prints, sent them up to the publisher, Ken McKenzie, and said, "Do you need photos?" And it was just mail back then. There was no email. So you wait, and you figure you're never going to hear anything. A handwritten letter came back from Ken, and he said, "Yeah, we could use a photographer. We'll give you three or four bucks a photo." And the

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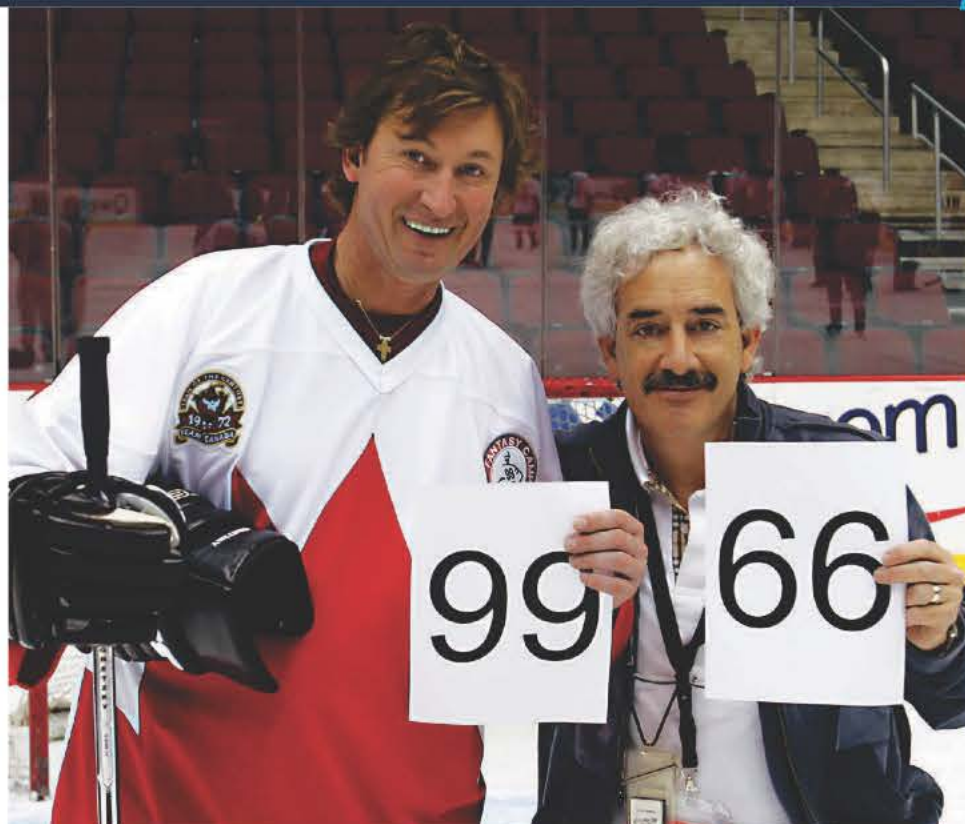
key line was, "Can you get into games on your own? Or do you need a photo pass?" It was like, "Yeah, a photo pass would be good." The next year, during 1974-75, I would call the Rangers or the Islanders, and they would give me passes throughout the season. That was it.

WGR: You're going into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame because of your overall career. You've shot for a lot of magazines and newspapers, but how important has The Hockey News been to your career?

BB: Well, it's been the Bible of Hockey since 1947, as we all know. Over the first few seasons, I was just doing The Hockey News. And that provided me the platform, with my little six-point type along the photos, to show other people that I could shoot hockey, and I could promote myself from there – or it was just self-promoted because everybody reads The Hockey News. And they would get it, and they would say, "Oh, look who shot that photo." They'd

A DAY TO REMEMBER

Bennett's call to be inducted into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame allowed him to truly appreciate his career.



see the name, and you just kind of hammer them with a name. I would do a lot of outreach to magazines and newspapers to try to sell them images, and there would be a name recognition at some point saying, "Oh, Bruce Bennett. Yeah, we've seen your photos in The Hockey News." So it was a great steppingstone throughout my entire career.

WGR: You're very involved with the NHL. Is that what you focus on most?

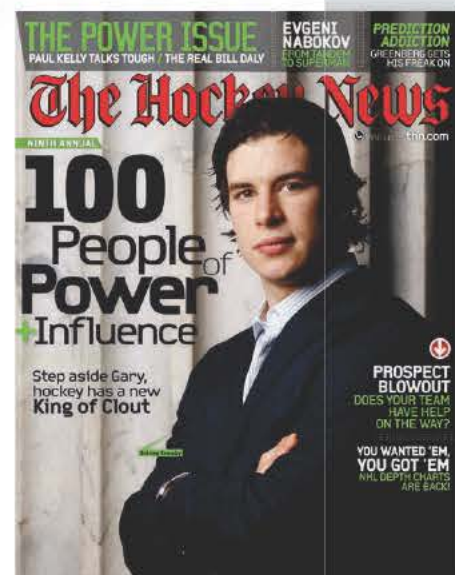
BB: Well, my work is still with a company called Getty Images. I direct their hockey coverage, which means I'm on the content side. So the sales guys say, "This is what we need." And that could include the NHL needing something or NHL member teams needing something. I'm the guy who empowers the photographers to say, "You gotta go, and you gotta get this shot for us." It's really dictating content and keeping an eye on all the leagues around the world where you might need content that clients will want. I'm also still maintaining a schedule of shooting 100 to 120 games each year and running the hockey end for Milan, which is coming up shortly. So it's a full schedule.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

While Bennett's work has appeared in many different places, he got his start at The Hockey News.

WGR: When you're taking pictures out there, do you know how it impacts and affects people when they see your pictures?

BB: I always said the most flattering thing that tells me more about my career is that everyone who comes and talks to me about my photography has a different favorite. It tells



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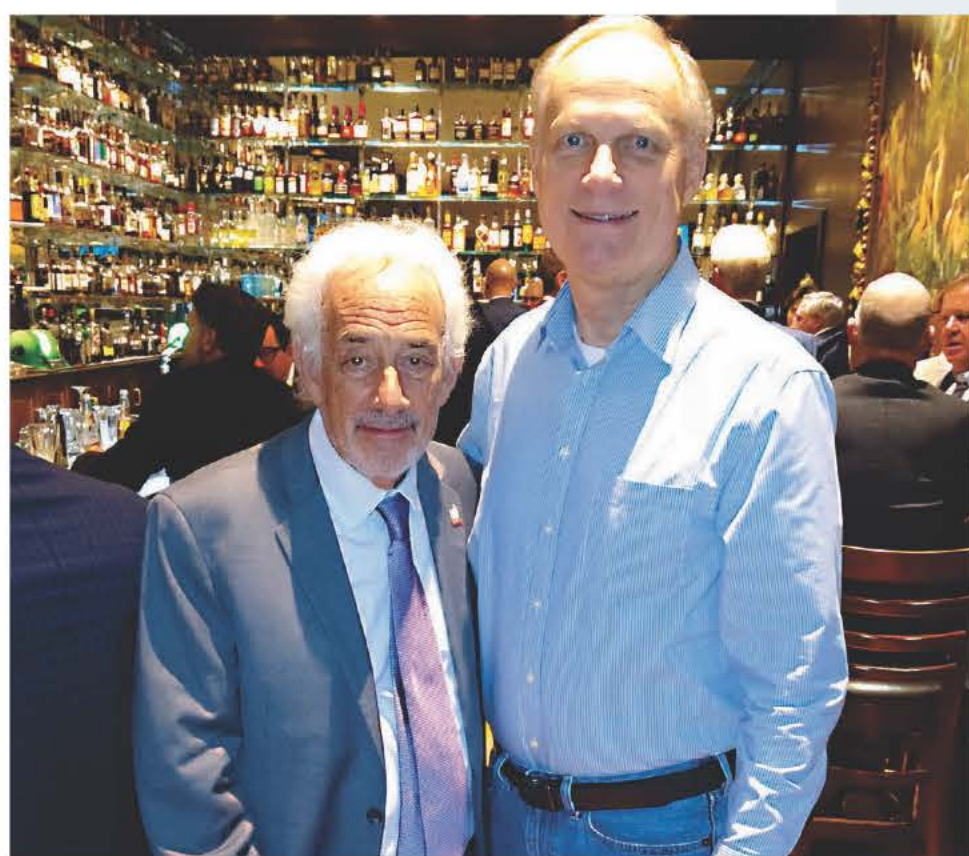
GETTY IMAGES HOCKEY DIRECTOR

Bennett, 52, is the Gordie Howe of hockey photography. He has been around since the 1970s, excels at his craft and is ubiquitous at big events. He captures the game at its most memorable moments. On this list, he represents Getty, which is developing a monopoly on the hockey photography business.



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me that the breadth and width of the collection I built is something that's going to withstand the test of time because everyone thinks of some photo that changed their opinion of the game, led them to be a fan of a certain player or team or that they admired the craft of hockey photography and the ability to get those photos of such a fast sport. **H**



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