



MORE THAN FIVE DECADES OF CAPTURING HOCKEY'S BIGGEST MOMENTS EARNED BRUCE BENNETT A SPOT IN THE U.S. HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

By Steve Drumwright, 12/03/25, 10:30AM MST

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If you have seen an iconic photograph from the NHL over the last 50-plus years, there is a good chance that Bruce Bennett took the photo.

These are not just the typical celebratory snaps following a playoff goal or a goaltender making a huge save on a breakaway in a key situation. No, we are talking tens of thousands of NHL photos that stand the test of time.

"We might be a year and change different, but I remember when I was in high school, Bruce Bennett photos were already in the top hockey magazines of the time," said Kevin Allen, the Hall of Fame writer who spent 34 years as the national hockey reporter for USA Today and who graduated high school in 1974. "I'm pretty sure he was in high school when he first started getting photos in *Hockey World*. I'm reasonably confident in saying this — I bet there hasn't been, or if there were, there weren't many NHL players that have played in the last 30 years or maybe longer that Bruce Bennett hasn't photographed. When you count up the number of players that he's photographed, I'm sure it's a very high percentage of players from the 1970s onward. He's captured all the greatest moments in NHL history for five decades. And nobody has done it better."

Bennett is the first photographer entering the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame. He will be going in with players Scott Gomez, Tara Mounsey, Zach Parise and Joe Pavelski. The late executive Ray Shero will receive the Lester Patrick Trophy as part of the Dec. 10 induction ceremony in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Bennett, a New York City native who began his career in 1974, has covered more than 5,600 games in 58 arenas, including 45 games that decided the Stanley Cup, 33 All-Star Games and six Olympics. His photos have appeared in almost every major publication or website around the world.

Frank Brown, who covered the NHL for the *Associated Press* and the *New York Daily News* before joining the league's communications department, had a unique description of Bennett and his skills.

"Everybody thinks photography is easy and I say that's the same as everybody who goes to a concert thinks they can sing as well as the person they're paying to watch or play an instrument as well as the instrumentalists that they're paying to watch," Brown said. "Then they try it and they realize that it's completely silly. They can't do it. Bruce does something that is very, very challenging, very tough to do and he does it incredibly well. He's been doing it incredibly well for 50-odd years through god knows how many incarnations of advancements in camera equipment and photographic techniques. He has bridged a lot of eras and what has resonated most is that he has excelled in all of them."

What separates Bennett from his contemporaries is his vision, not only when he is framing up a shot during a game, but what different angles to get or what spot to put a camera.

"Now we see the photography advancements, people who come in to photograph games, set up equipment," Allen said. "But I remember Bruce doing that 30 years ago. Most guys would show up with a camera with a strap holding it on, walking in, but Bruce came in in the morning, and he set up strobes and had things organized. He was just ahead of his time. He was able to turn it into a business."

Bennett has put cameras inside of the net and positioned cameras up in the rafters.

One shot that sticks out to Brown came in 1980. That was when Bennett's creativity came into play and had young Islanders star Mike Bossy pose with a burning stick for the *Hockey News*.

"It was brilliant," Brown said. "It was the perfect summary of how Bruce is able to find a new angle, find a new look. He's pioneered the photographs from looking straight down from the roof of the arena. He's advanced the photography from in the net. Best of all — and this is like

catching snowflakes — he has captured so many moments of incredible personal expression on the faces of the players, incredible emotion. And it's all somehow clear and centered and perfect. I really just admire what he's able to do."

Bennett remained independent for most of his career. But in 2004 he sold Bruce Bennett Studios, with a catalog of more than 2 million hockey photos dating back to 1900, to Getty Images and he became part of the company.

Bennett's impact on the game is perhaps as important as anyone else already inducted.

"It was a discussion that was centered on the uniqueness of what he did. A lot of people, myself included, just pointed out that the growth of the game was helped by Bruce Bennett's artistry," Allen said. "It's just so dramatic. The color photos and the perspiration on the players. All of that just sort of spawned my enthusiasm about the game. If it did it for me, I'm sure it did for thousands of others as well."

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