



# LARRY KWONG

## 2016 FOUNDER'S AWARD RECIPIENT



Larry Kwong played in only one game – a total of about 90 seconds - in the National Hockey League, with the New York Rangers in 1947-48.

But as the first player of Asian descent to play in the NHL, Larry broke the league's colour barrier 10 years before Willie O'Ree, and became a hero to thousands of Chinese-Canadians, starting a change in attitudes about what a person of minority heritage could achieve in this country.

Larry was a provincial and national champion, top scorer for several high-level teams, and the MVP of the Quebec Senior Hockey League (QSHL), arguably the world's best league after the NHL. Kwong also was a major figure in international sport, as a player/coach and coach with three club teams in Switzerland (1958-64).

During World War II, Larry starred with the Red Deer Wheelers of the Alberta Inter-Services League, before signing with the Rangers in 1946. He played parts of two seasons with the New York Rovers of the Eastern Hockey League and the Quebec Senior Hockey League, before his historic game with the Rangers.

Overall, Larry played nine seasons in the QSHL, one with the Rovers, seven with the Valleyfield Braves (1948-55), and one with Trois Rivieres. He was league MVP in 1951 with Valleyfield, and averaged more than a point a game in his QSHL career competing against future NHL stars such as Jean Beliveau, Dickie Moore, Jacques Plante, Gerry McNeil and Jean-Guy Talbot.

From 1955-57, Larry had stints in the International League, Quebec Hockey League and Ontario Senior League, before moving to Europe to play and coach for 15 years.

Among Larry's notable accomplishments:

- Member of the British Columbia Senior A Savage Cup champion Trail Smoke Eaters in 1946.
- Awarded the keys to New York City's Chinatown in 1946.
- 400 goals and 838 points in his senior/minor pro career.
- Leading scorer with the New York Rovers (1947-48), Valleyfield Braves (1951-52), and Swiss HC Ambri-Piotta (1958-59).
- Led the QSHL in assists and second in points (1950-51); second in goals to Beliveau and third in points (1951-52).
- First Chinese-Canadian to coach a Senior A hockey club (HC Ambri-Piotta)





- Scored 55 goals in 55 games with Nottingham Panthers of the British National League (1957-58).
- First honorary lifetime member of the Society of North American Hockey Historians and Researchers (SONAHHR) in 2009

Larry returned to Calgary in 1972, where he was a member of the Rotary Club of Calgary South for more than 30 years. He was honoured with the Asian Heritage Month Award (2002) as a role model for Chinese Canadians and Calgarians.

Larry was born in Vernon, BC, where he played his minor hockey. Only in the past decade has his story gained prominence. He was featured in CBC's *Hockey: A People's History* (2006) and the award-winning documentary *Lost Years: A People's Struggle for Justice* (2011). He was also profiled in *Hockey Trailblazers* (Scholastic Canada, 2011).

