

## **MASC BOARD RECOGNIZES A TRUE CHAMPION AND “A GREAT AMERICAN”**

The Board of Directors and the staff of the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission (MASC) are terribly saddened by the passing of Minnesota State Senator James Metzen.

Senator Metzen, from South St. Paul, was clearly one of the state’s most important amateur sports champions. Specifically, he campaigned for the passage of the original Mighty Ducks legislation in 1995, which helped fund the construction of 61 additional ice sheets across the state. These rinks facilitated an expansion of ice sports to every corner of the state and allowed for newly sanctioned high school girl’s teams to get the ice time they needed.

The Senator served on the Board of Directors of the Amateur Sports Commission for several terms. During his tenure on the Board, the National Sports Center in Blaine became the largest sports complex in North America, including eight sheets of ice at the Schwan Super Rink. Alex Rowell, MASC Board Chair, said: “Having served on the Board with Senator Metzen I observed firsthand his infectious enthusiasm for all amateur sports, especially hockey. He definitely moved the needle in our state.”

Through his work at the Capitol, Senator Metzen was the driving force to ensure the existence of facilities for boys and girls to play hockey and other ice sports for years to come. The Senator’s public policy influence is simply profound. MASC Executive Director Todd Johnson observed, “I had the privilege of seeing Senator Metzen's public policy and political prowess in several settings. As the legislative director to the Speaker of the House, I quickly learned his adroitness around the Capitol. Then, as Executive Director of the MASC, he pushed like no other legislator for our agenda.”

It is quite fitting that during his final legislative session, Governor Dayton and Senator Metzen’s colleagues appropriated \$10 million for improving Minnesota ice arenas and renamed the grant program in his honor. It is now statutorily deemed the: “James Metzen Mighty Ducks Ice Arena Grant Program.”