



KEEPER OF THE FAITH

She's weathered cold snaps, coaching changes, and generational shifts. For Lois Hazlett, Queen's football is forever.

BY TONY ATHERTON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHNNY C.Y. LAM

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October 6, 1956. The thermometer topped 16 C at Richardson Memorial Stadium in the heart of Queen's campus for the Golden Gaels' home opener against their archrival, the University of Toronto's Varsity Blues – not an ideal temperature, perhaps, if you're wearing a helmet and shoulder pads and slamming into bodies as pliant as sides of beef, but glorious if you're sitting in the stands.

And the stands were pretty full. Students, alumni, faculty, and locals had come to watch the reigning Ontario University Athletics football champs begin their quest to win the Yates Cup for a second straight year. Gaels head coach Frank Tindall, a brilliant tactician beloved by his players, had seven losing seasons before 1955, but now there was a sense the tide was turning. Before he retired in 1975, Coach Tindall would lead the Gaels to eight Yates Cups and a national championship.

On one side of the field, students sang the Oil Thigh, the Queen's Bands played, the Varsity cheer squad performed acrobatics. On the other side, at the highest point in the covered grandstand, were a pair of new season-ticket holders who might have gone unnoticed except for one thing: Queen's newest associate professor of surgery, Dr. John Hazlett, an orthopedic surgeon who had recently spent a year in New York City studying cutting-edge treatments for scoliosis, stood six-foot-seven, which, in 1956, singled him out in any crowd.

Arrested by the imposing presence of Dr. Hazlett, one might have overlooked his wife sitting next to him. Lois Hazlett, a former nurse at Toronto Western Hospital, wouldn't have cared; she was intent on the game. You might say that theirs was a match made on the gridiron – their first date, a few years before, had been to an Argos game at Varsity Stadium.

If Frank Tindall was starting on the road to a Queen's football dynasty that day in 1956, it was nowhere near as enduring as the tradition Lois Hazlett launched that same year, one that continues to this day. This football season, opening Aug. 23 at the latest incarnation of Richardson Stadium, marks Mrs. Hazlett's 69th year as a season-ticket holder. Four coaches and two stadiums have come and gone since 1956, but Lois Hazlett, now 96, hasn't broken faith with her beloved Gaels. She still goes to every home game, "as long as it doesn't rain."

Cold doesn't faze her; she'll bring along the same heavy lap rug she and her husband used to share during late-season games. Hardship does not unnerve her; when her husband had a stroke in 1995 and needed a wheelchair, she got a van with a lift and drove him to every game

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for 11 years. "They let me park just outside of the gate so I could easily get him out of the van," she recalls. Inconvenience is a mere piffle; she uses a walker now and has switched her seats to the east side, closer to the entrance where she is dropped off, even though it means looking into the sun. "It's pretty hard sometimes," she says with a shrug.

She doesn't think of it as maintaining a tradition or upholding a streak. "I just go. I enjoy it ... It's very nice to sit out in the fall weather in the fresh air and watch something interesting."

Sports have been in Mrs. Hazlett's blood since she was a kid in the 1930s, growing up near Baby Point in Toronto's west end. The streets around her home served served as the neighbourhood ball diamond, road hockey arena, and football field, depending on the mood of the children who played there, oblivious to gender.

Her father, one leg shortened by tuberculosis, didn't really play sports, she says, but he coached baseball, hockey, and lacrosse, and he would take her to practices and games. "That's probably why I got interested in sports," she says.

She credits her love of football to a sacrosanct tradition at her high school in the 1940s. Every Friday afternoon in the fall, she says, Humber College Institute would cancel classes so students could take the streetcar to the stadium at Oakwood and St. Clair avenues and watch high school football.

Her familiarity with the game must have eased her introduction to her future in-laws, Queen's alumni Dr. Jack Hazlett (BA'15, MD'19) and Flora Fair Hazlett BA'16), both thorough football fans who bled tricolour.

Jack Hazlett was a bona fide Queen's football hero, a centre half and kicker who had single-handedly scored 43 points in back-to-back games in one of his seasons, years before the original Richardson Stadium was even dreamed of. He was inducted into the Queen's Football Hall of Fame in the 1980s.

Lois Hazlett figures her husband, Jack's son, might have played as well were it not for the fact he was at university during the Second World War when sports were curtailed. Since he was attending the University of Toronto, it would have meant playing for the cursed Varsity Blues, so maybe it's all for the best.

When John Hazlett moved with his wife to Kingston in the 1950s, he became more than a mere fan of Gael football. Merv Daub, Com'66, author of *Gael Force: A History of Football at Queen's, 1882-2016*, remembers his presence in the Gaels' locker room as one of the team doctors in the 1960s.

A decade later, there was another Hazlett in the locker room, Lois's son Paul, Artsci'80, MSc'82, the second of her four boys. Paul Hazlett, an end, was a member of the 1978 national championship team — the first Vanier Cup for Queen's since Frank Tindall's boys had taken it in 1968.

"When Paul was playing, we went to all of the out-of-town games as

well," says Mrs. Hazlett.

Paul's son, Ian, PHE'07, continued the Hazlett tradition — and embellished it. Ian Hazlett was a linebacker for the Gaels in the mid-2000s and was selected as an OUA first-team all-star in 2005. His 61 tackles that year ranked first in the OUA and third in the country.

When he was drafted by the Calgary Stampeders in 2007, one sports commentator called him "a tackling machine." Injuries would keep him from playing in the Canadian Football League, his grandmother says, but his time with the Gaels is still recalled with pride. Mrs. Hazlett says Ian's eight-year-old son, Aiden, has already decided he'll be a Golden Gael when he gets big enough.

The Hazlett sports dynasty at Queen's isn't restricted to football, however. Emily Hazlett, Artsci'17, daughter of Lois's third son, Mark, was a starting point guard in all five of her basketball seasons with the Gaels, and captain of the team in her final two years. Her teams won two OUA silver medals and made two appearances at the national championship tournament.

For those five years, Lois Hazlett was a regular at the ARC varsity gym as well as Richardson Stadium.

"I had never been to basketball, but I went to all her games," says Mrs. Hazlett.

But football remains her enduring love, and she's got high hopes for the team in the coming season. "From what Mr. [head coach Steve] Snyder says, they're supposed to be pretty good, so we'll hope so."

Last year's team, she says, "was good. They didn't quite have enough to pull them through, but it was good."

Mrs. Hazlett has certainly earned the right to comment on the team. This year will mark 143 seasons in Queen's football history, making the team one of the three oldest in Canada. Remarkably, Mrs. Hazlett has been on the sidelines for almost half of the Golden Gaels' epic saga.

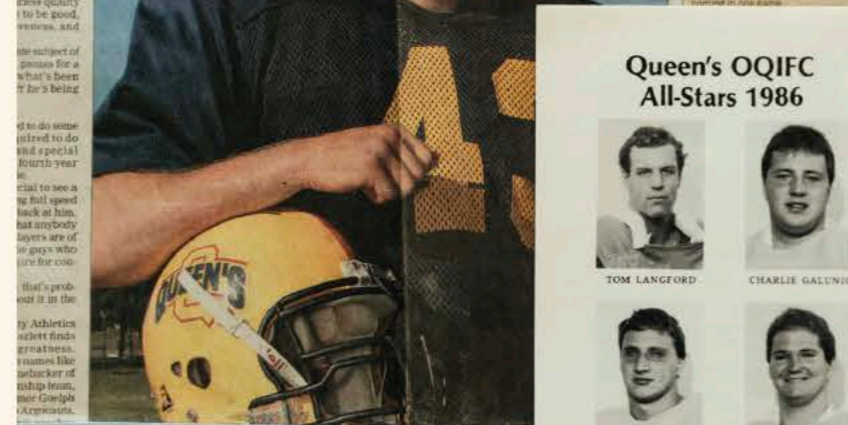
Merv Daub, Queen's football historian, former player, and professor emeritus at Smith School of Business, is in awe of Lois Hazlett's



is no time to be bored
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Queen's one of a special breed

The match
What? Opening game of the Ontario University Athletics football season.
Who? Toronto Blues vs. Queen's Golden Gaels.
Location: Monday, 2 p.m., Richardson Stadium.
Background: Both teams played the playoffs last year, each won the other as an opponent in that round.
History: This will be the 143rd time the teams have met since 1887. Toronto have 1 league Queen's since Oct. 4, 1975, and 16 games since 1998. The Gaels have outscored the Blues 233-96, with 23 of those Toronto points coming in the 1990s.



Queen's OQIFC All-Stars 1986



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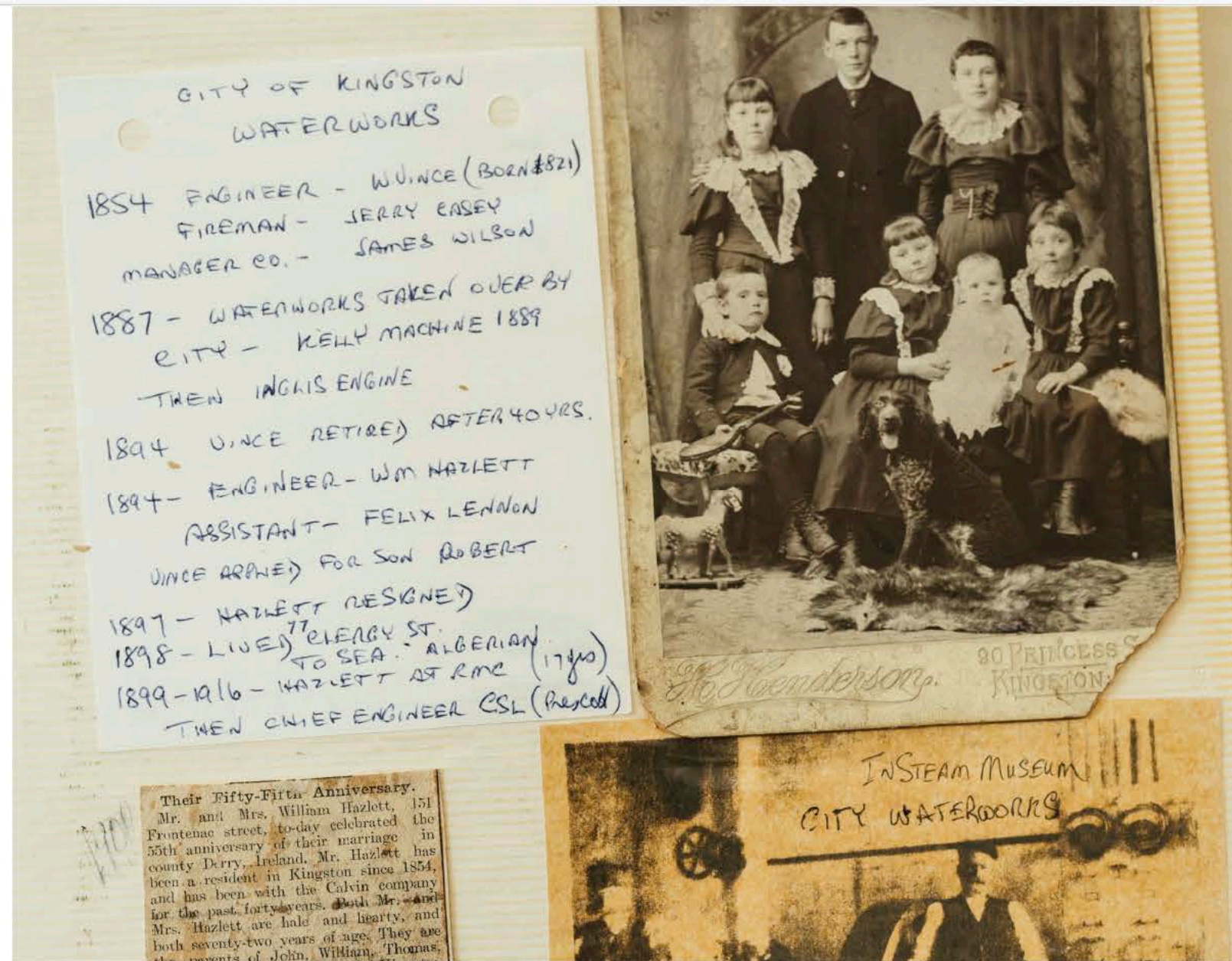
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Queen's Golden Gaels 1986 Football Statistics

Scoring					Ranking				
	TD	FG	C	S	TP	Car	Yds	Td	Int
Conne Mandala	1	5	24	0	49	Chris Rankay	90	109	8
Steve Porter	4				24	Stuart Harshaw	80	80	4
Stuart Harshaw	4				24	Ted Bergman	48	181	2
Chris Rankay	4				24	Doug Corbett	39	171	2
Doug Corbett	3				18	Trevor Hains	22	81	1
Trevor Hains	2				12				

Passing					Receiving				
	No.	Yds.	Avg.	I.	Comp.	Yds.	Td.	Int.	%
Conne Mandala	49	1685	34.4	60	138	67	1091	8	77.9
Paul Senyshyn	6	188	31.3	36	36	423	3	3	66

Interceptions					Receiving				
	No.	Yds.			Comp.	Yds.	Td.	Int.	%
Mark Burleigh	4	n3			22	342	2	41	79.0
					27	486	3	24	79.2



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don't do it later. You have to have an idea about football, and what it is."

Still, she says, football is a big part of Queen's heritage "and always has been, and I think there's still a lot of the diehards that are [at the games] all the time. And," she adds hopefully, "some students now."

There are a lot of mementos from Lois Hazlett's long and eventful life scattered around her apartment: dollhouses furnished with the delicate miniatures she used to craft; a collection of teddy bears frolicking on her sofa, bed, and bureau ("My great-granddaughter says she counted 109"); her tapestry rendition of an historic view of Kingston Harbour; and a poster-sized photo of her late husband towering over Pierre Trudeau during Dr. Hazlett's run for a seat for the federal Liberals in 1972 (he lost to Flora MacDonald).

But there is also a framed game jersey given to her granddaughter Emily after her last season with the Gaels, and two fat albums bulging with clippings once curated by her husband. She returns to these albums often, she says. They tell in

detail the remarkable story of the Hazlett family at Queen's, but there is nothing in them to commemorate Lois's achievement as a fan of unparalleled dedication.

That's about to change. Coach Snyder recently visited Mrs. Hazlett to present her with a Gaels game ball and tell her she would be honoured with a Fan of Distinction award at this year's Football Hall of Fame ceremony. He said she would also be recognized at the Homecoming Game on Oct. 18, which, given her record, he was sure she'd attend.

"Well," Mrs. Hazlett replied, unfazed, "as long as it's not raining." ❄️



▲ A page from one of the albums curated by the late Dr. Hazlett.

◀ In June, Coach Snyder presented Mrs. Hazlett with a Gaels game ball and shared the news that she would receive the inaugural Fan of Distinction award at this year's Football Hall of Fame ceremony in late September.

▶ Mrs. Hazlett proudly displays the Gaels game jersey that was gifted to her granddaughter, Emily, in honour of her final season of basketball. And, above, the heavy blanket Mrs. Hazlett often takes to games.

achievement. "I know there are a lot of loyal old Kingstonians who go to Queen's football games, but I don't think I've ever heard of a longevity record like that," says Prof. Daub. "She would have seen a massive evolution [in the game] from a small-scale intimate university of maybe 4,000 people, all the way up to now, when there are 20,000-plus students, and there's a big stadium with digital scoreboards."

The original Richardson Stadium was a modest affair near where Tindall Field now sits, northeast of Victoria Hall. The stadium was already 36 years old when Mrs. Hazlett first sat in its stands. The newest version of Richardson Stadium on West Campus is modern, well equipped, and, with its recently opened pavilion, "probably the best small stadium in Canada," says Prof. Daub.

While her surroundings might have improved over the decades, Mrs. Hazlett is adamant that her best experience of football at Queen's was at that original stadium in the 1960s, when the team was playing well and the tradition of Saturday afternoon football was at its peak. "The students all went ... I remember the noise," she says.

But football, in general, has lost its place in our culture, figures Mrs. Hazlett, thinking back to her days at Humber College. "If you don't grow up in high school [attending football games], you

