

2023 BENEFIT GALA



*Ice
Theatre
of
New York*®

**CELEBRATING THE JOY
OF DANCING ON ICE**

HONORING
OLYMPIAN, US NATIONAL CHAMPION & ICE ARTIST

JASON BROWN

CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD RECIPIENT **ROHENE WARD**

ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT **MARNI HALASA**



Congratulations to all the honorees
and to Ice Theatre of New York.

The Hughes Family



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ABOUT THE COMPANY

Ice Theatre of New York® (ITNY) creates and advances dance on ice as an ensemble performing art and to provide education and public performances to people of all ages. Founded by Moira North in 1984, ITNY created the first not-for-profit professional ice dance company in the United States and was the first to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

ITNY achieves its public arts and education mission by:

- Commissioning and performing new choreography of pieces created by recognized and emerging dance and ice skating choreographers. The company has created exclusive works by choreographers as varied as well-known skating choreographers Elisa Angeli, Lorna Brown, and Joel Dear, modern dance choreographers Jacquelyn Buglisi, Elisa Monte, David Parsons, and Jody Sperling, performance artist Ann Carlson, McKnight Choreographer Fellow Deneane Richburg, and ballet great Edward Villella. We have just begun preparations for our first commissioned work with new media artist and creative technologist LaJunié McMillian.
- Making performances accessible to diverse audiences and presenting dozens of free performances, featuring our current repertory throughout New York City.
- Offering arts education programs on ice dancing and figure skating for school-aged children in Brooklyn, Queens, and Upper Manhattan, annually serving 800 – 1,000 NYC school students.
- Training company skaters and guest skating artists in its weekly Master Edge Classes at Chelsea Piers Sky Rink, as well as offering training programs for aspiring ice dance artists, including our Junior Ensemble.
- Collaborating with choreographers, producers, presenters, administrators and advocates from the dance and skating worlds and beyond while exploring creatively exciting relationships with artists from theatre, music, and new media disciplines.

62 Chelsea Piers, Suite 308, New York, NY 10011

(212) 929-5811 • itny@icetheatre.org

icetheatre.org    



BENEFIT COMMITTEE

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**CELEBRATING THE JOY
OF DANCING ON ICE**

**WELCOME TO OUR 38TH
“IT CONTINUES TO TAKE A VILLAGE” BENEFIT GALA**

I so warmly welcome you here with us tonight to celebrate **Jason Brown, Rohene Ward,** and **Marni Halasa**....Talk about a village of excellence within the worlds of figure skating, choreography, and coaching!

With your continued help, Ice Theatre of New York® has and will maintain the important work that we do: commissioning choreographers and performance artists to create new works for the company, nurturing emerging artists, and introducing New York City Public School students to the art and joy of skating. Your support encourages our exploration of what is possible within the realm of artistic ice dance. This year, we will feature four world premieres – “Timelessness” a duet by Lorna Brown, “Aquata” a quartet by Mauro Bruni, “Neurocircle” a solo aerial and ice piece by Sarah France, and a new solo piece “This Bitter Earth” by award winning choreographer Rohene Ward.

Looking ahead, I invite you to join us at our weekly Edge Classes at Sky Rink, our City Skate Concert Series at Rockefeller Center, Bryant Park, Wollman Rink, and other outdoor seasonal rinks, as well as our educational outreach program, the “New Works and Young Artists Series,” offered free to public school students across the city boroughs.

The commitment to creating works that are significant not only for their beauty and artistic value but for their meaning in our ever-shifting world remains a focus for Ice Theatre of New York. This season, pieces such as “The Unseen,” which highlighted racial inequities through the lens of profiling and celebrating Black figure skaters using real motion capture techniques in a gallery setting on synthetic ice; “Of Water and Ice,” which speaks to climate change and the imperative to protect our arctic ice; and “Neurocircle,” which puts the neurodivergent lived experience into flight through the combined arts of dancing on ice and aerial movement all spoke to this mission.

Skating...combines and surpasses the joys of flying and dancing: only in a certain type of a dream do we ever else attain a higher degree of the same ravishing experience of exultantly skimming the earth.

— Ernest Jones, Biographer of Freud

Thank you for helping create and sustain our Ice Theatre of New York dream and for joining us as we glide gracefully and boldly into our future choreographic innovations, collaborations, and outreach programming!

Warmest Wishes,



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

May 8, 2023

Dear Friends:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone as the Ice Theatre of New York (ITNY) hosts its 2023 benefit gala and performance.

Arts education inspires young people to explore their creativity and imagine new possibilities. For nearly four decades, ITNY has expanded access to the arts by offering figure skating lessons to local public school students from underserved communities. It also enriches our cultural sector through its performances featuring professional ice dancers and new works by gifted choreographers. I am grateful to count this outstanding organization as an ally in my Administration's mission to increase opportunity for New Yorkers of all backgrounds, and I applaud everyone gathered at Chelsea Piers tonight for their efforts to support ITNY's wonderful programs. Together, we will continue to #GetStuffDone and forge a brighter, fairer, and more prosperous future for all.

On behalf of the City of New York, I extend congratulations to this year's honorees. Please accept my best wishes for a festive evening and continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Adams".

Eric Adams
Mayor





OFFICE OF THE
**MANHATTAN
BOROUGH PRESIDENT**

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May 8, 2023

Dear Friends,

I'm pleased to join you in celebrating Ice Theatre of New York's 2023 Benefit Gala and Performance.

For almost four decades, ITNY has been cultivating and showcasing groundbreaking ice dancing. You have changed the face of figure skating, pushing the boundaries of movement and increasing diversity across the discipline. I'm especially grateful for ITNY's many free performances across the city and your outreach program for at-risk public school students.

Congratulations to tonight's honoree, Olympian, U.S. national champion, and ice artist Jason Brown. I would also like to congratulate Olympic choreographer Rohene Ward on receiving the Choreography Award and Marni Halasa on receiving the Alumni Award.

On behalf of the Borough of Manhattan, I wish you another year of success.

Sincerely,

Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President

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ZONING AND FRANCHISES

14 April, 2023

Dear Friends,

I write to honor a special individual who we have all had the privilege of watching excel at the highest levels of his craft — the distinguished Olympian, U.S. National Champion, and ice artist, Jason Brown. Jason has left an indelible imprint on the world of figure skating, and it is with immense pride that I celebrate his many accomplishments here today.

A skilled competitor, a graceful skater, and a creative performer, Jason has distinguished himself on the ice, captivating judges and audiences around the world. Jason has earned an impressive collection of trophies for his breathtaking performances, from the Grand Prix Circuit to the Four Continents Championships to the Olympics. Jason is, unquestionably, one of the world's most artistic skaters, delivering iconic programs with stunning choreography year in and year out.

But Jason Brown is more than just a skater. Both on and off the ice, Jason has gone above and beyond to bring various communities together, like when he hosted ITNY's streaming broadcast "Pivoting Through The Pandemic" in May of 2021. He transcends cultures and borders. Due to his popularity in Japan, Jason studied Japanese to communicate with his adoring fans, demonstrating an earnest commitment to connecting to the ice dance world beyond his own performances.

I commend Jason Brown for his many achievements and genuine efforts to grow the world of figure skating. I cannot think of a more deserving recipient of this honor from Ice Theatre of New York.

Sincerely,

New York City Council Member Shaun Abreu



ERIK BOTTCHEER
COUNCIL MEMBER

THIRD COUNCIL DISTRICT OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
224 WEST 30TH STREET, #1206
NEW YORK, NY 10001

TELEPHONE
(212) 564-7757

May 8, 2023

Ice Theatre of New York, Inc.
62 Chelsea Piers #308
New York, NY 10011

Dear Friends,

I am honored to have the opportunity to offer my congratulations on the Ice Theatre's 2023 Benefit Gala and Performance. In particular, I extend my warmest congratulations to Jason Brown, an extraordinary ice artist who has made the entire nation proud at the Olympics and awed us all at home with his numerous championship titles and medals at the national and international levels.

Additionally, I want to celebrate Rohene Ward for receiving ITNY's Choreography Award and Marni Halasa for winning the Alumni Award. I know I speak for us all when I thank you for continuing to push the art forward and continually wowing us with your discipline and creativity.

I am especially thrilled to join ITNY for its 2023 Benefit Gala and Performance as we all come together to celebrate ITTNY's continued dedication to advancing dance on ice, setting a national standard for ice dance companies.

Congratulations to Mr. Brown, Mr. Ward, and Ms. Halasa again for their accomplishments, and congratulations to ITNY and Moira North on another successful year. Here's to wishing for your continued success in the years ahead and a wonderful time for everyone here tonight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Erik Bottcher'.

ERIK BOTTCHEER
Council Member
District 3

CONGRATULATIONS TO
JASON BROWN
ON BRINGING SO MUCH
BEAUTY AND PASSION TO
FIGURE SKATING!

X VERA

VERAWANG



Dear Jason,
Congratulations!
Thank you for your
beautiful artistic skating

From your biggest fan,
RICHARD
"MR. DEBONAIR"
DWYER

U.S. FIGURE SKATING CONGRATULATES

JASON BROWN

Athlete Honoree
Two-time Olympian
2014 Olympic Team Event bronze medalist
2015 U.S. Champion

ROHENE WARD

Choreography Award Recipient
3-time PSA/U.S. Figure Skating
Choreographer of the Year (Jason Brown)

MARNI HALASA

ITNY Alumni Award Recipient



JASON BROWN: THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES

By Edward Z. Epstein



Multi-talented Jason Brown has always had that something extra that thrills audiences; it was never more evident than at this year's World Championships, where he won prolonged, well-deserved standing ovations for his programs.

His short was a tour-de-force, both an artistic and athletic achievement. The

choreography, by Rohene Ward [recipient of this year's ITNY Choreography Award] was superb, as one element flowed seamlessly into another, while Jason's interpretation of the music, an element so often lacking in skaters' programs as they race from one jump to another, was memorable. His jumps and

spins were flawlessly executed, his form throughout perfect.

If one were to make a comparison between Brown and skaters of an earlier generation, John Curry and Toller Cranston come to mind. Another description: on the ice, he is a combination of Mikhail Baryshnikov and Fred Astaire! And, unlike many of his peers, he effortlessly radiates the joy of skating.

Born in Los Angeles on December 15, 1994, raised in Highland Park, Illinois, Jason has an older sister, Jordan, a younger brother, Dylan, and "they have always been my best cheerleaders," smiles Jason. His entrance into the world of skating began at age three-and-a-half, when his mother enrolled him and his sister in Learn to Skate classes.

He learned fast. A proper education, of course, was tops on the list, and piano lessons were eventually begun as well. "My piano teacher, in due course, came to the conclusion that 'piano' was not the kind of thing I was going to pursue," recalls Jason. "But those lessons brought music into my life, and I knew that would help me tremendously as far as my skating was concerned."





You've given me too many memories to count.
But you are in the memory giving business.
Congratulations on this wonderful recognition!

Lunge, Lean, Leap and Love it!
Congratulations Jason and Rohene



Douglas Haw

Congratulations Jason!
You are an inspiration.

Susie Gharib and
Fereydoun Nazem





Balancing an education with a skating career was far from a carefree undertaking. Slowly but surely, Jason made enormous progress on the ice, eventually becoming a two-time World Junior medalist, Junior Grand Prix Final champion, Junior National champion, a nine-time Grand Prix medalist, and, in 2015, he won the U.S. National championship.

Jason's was an "A Star is Born" saga, or so it seemed. In reality, however, as in all high-powered, high-level competitive fields – "You try being a 'legend,' see how easy it is to live up to that," Judy Garland once said -- there were pitfalls in store. "You're in a constant state of comparing yourself to others," Jason would later note, "being the best that you can be, and maybe even using other people as motivation, but there's always a tipping point..."

Jason's tipping point was reached as he was eagerly anticipating the 2018 Olympic Games. "My goal was to medal

at Nationals," he said, "and then find myself part of the Olympic team!"

He was focused, laser-like, on achieving that goal, to the degree that "It really ate away at me, instead of fueling me."

The goal became an obsession.

And then the dream shattered – "It took the wind out of me" -- when he ended up placing sixth at Nationals. "It's so hard to be out there alone," he later recalled. "My self-worth was fully and completely wrapped around what my skating was at that moment. I was exhausted. I went out there and I have never really bombed in an event, and I bombed."

It was, for Jason, a surreal experience. Literally. "I couldn't get that word out of my head. I kept doing well enough that people assumed I was fine. But it was a really difficult time. I ended up first alternate to that Olympic team — it was an all-consuming disappointment."

And he felt trapped. The stress of

hyper-training had taken a heavy toll.

"Those were the dark days," remembered his mother, Marla. "It was hard, because it went on for a long time."

Jason was well aware that changes had to be made. Drastic changes. It would take courage and will-power; de-coupling one's self-worth from the all-consuming desire to win – and then, after all the effort, not winning! – presented a daunting challenge.

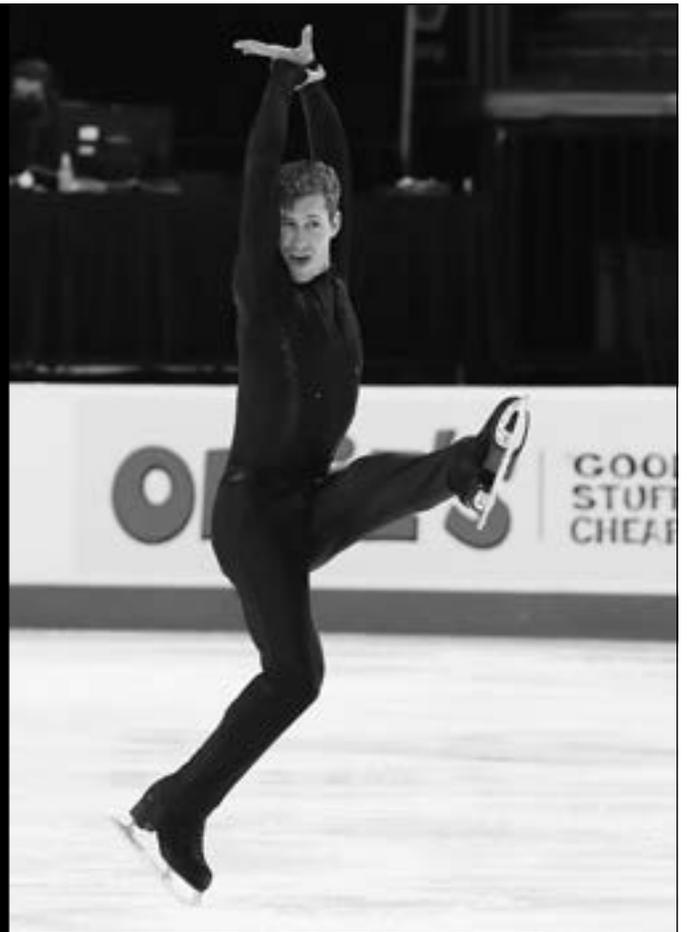
As famed coach Frank Carroll has said, after his star pupil, Michelle Kwan, to the shock of skating fans throughout the world, failed to win gold at two Olympic Games: "Things happen in life, in sport..."

As Michelle herself has said, "You have to learn to cope and be happy and enjoy life. A lot of things aren't going to go your way."

Jason began intensive sessions with a sports psychologist. He held noth-

Jason, thank you
for all the joy!

Frank Carroll



To my dear friends, Jason and Rohene,

Thank you for the many years you have shared your kindness, your creativity,
your affection, your joy and your love of skating with all of us!

With gratitude,

Taffy Holliday and Richard Katz



ing back. “I was not shy about talking through all of it with her,” he said, and it was the beginning of his “climbing out of the hole that I had dug myself in.”

Self-confidence slowly returned, along with the knowledge that it was essential to disconnect from skating when away from the ice. After his ordeal, when with friends and family, skating was not a topic for discussion. “My family was incredible,” says Jason, “their support never wavered. It was so nice to come home and disconnect rather than come home and then continue on with my training day!”

With the passage of time, the desire to compete returned, and Jason, just as Sinatra sings in “That’s Life,” picked himself up and got back in the race!

“It was a blast to come back to competition, rejuvenated,” he says.

His performances at this year’s National championships, and, most

recently, the World Championships, under the tutelage of coaches Brian Orser [a former ITNY honoree] and Tracy Wilson, represent a personal triumph. His long program, appropriately enough, was skated to “The Impossible Dream,” from “Man of La Mancha.” And he delivered a show-stopping exhibition performance, with rock star impact, skating to music by The Backstreet Boys.

Does he have plans to continue competing? “I do, but you never know! After the ’22 season, I really thought I was done, thought I was going to retire after that. I took the summer and spring to dive into shows – ‘Stars on Ice,’ the skating events in Japan, and suddenly I was more energized, more passionate about the sport. I love performing, the interaction with the audiences, I love all of it.”

Acclaim notwithstanding, Jason remains a realist: “After skating is all done, there’s a lot of different directions

that I can go in, areas that I really want to explore.”

His mother is a TV producer – will she perhaps be producing something about Jason? He smiles. “Who knows? Never say never!”

As the old saying goes, “Life is an adventure.” For Jason, the future is sure to offer many new and fascinating adventures.

“Jason Brown exemplifies what ITNY is all about,” states company founder Moira North. “Pursuing creative and artistic excellence in the sport of figure skating is obviously our mutual goal, and we are delighted that Jason is the recipient of our 2023 Award.”

Edward Z. Epstein’s latest book is “FRANK & MARILYN: The fascinating Lives and Loves of Frank Sinatra and Marilyn Monroe,” published by Post Hill Press, distributed by Simon & Schuster.



The electrifying Rohene -

Congratulations on receiving
ITNY's Choreography Award.

Continue to transform this sport with your
commanding performances and
your choreographic excellence.

I'm so proud of your successes.

Atoy Wilson

ITNY Advisor Board Member



Rohene, I am so PROUD of you
and all that you have contributed
to the skating world!

Page Lipe

Celebrating tonight's
Ice Theatre of New York
honorees:

**JASON BROWN
ROHENE WARD
MARNI HALASA**



Congratulations!

Craig Cichy

ROHENE WARD

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF TALENT

By Lynn Rutherford



Rohene Ward is, rightfully, being honored by Ice Theatre of New York® (ITNY) for his achievements in choreography, but that is just one facet of the man. He is equal parts performer, creator, coach, and activist, all tempered with the sensitivity of a finely tuned violin.

ITNY's association with Ward stretches back a decade, with his appearances as a guest artist during its home seasons and with the company at Rockefeller Center during Black History Month. In 2020, he hosted a Choreo Lab, sharing his knowledge of hip hop.

"We always knew Rohene as a great performer," says ITNY founder Moira North, citing her two favorite Ward programs, to Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings" and to Dinah Washington's rendition of "Bitter Earth."

"He has a very spiritual, delicate sense of glide on ice," North said. "There is a part of him that is profoundly poetic. He can also be just plain fun and entertaining, with his Prince ("Purple Rain") tribute, he performed with us in 2016."

I first appreciated Ward's power as a performer at the 2002 U.S. Figure Skating Championships, held in Los Angeles' Staples Center. My pals rose at ungodly hours, and sacrificed sit-down dinners, to watch his practice group. Guys like Todd Eldredge, Timothy Goebel and Michael Weiss were the stars of the day, but Ward was the skater we talked about most.

He had a quad – a relative rarity for U.S. men back then – and could do triples in both directions. His spirals, layback spin and Ina Bauer rivalled those of Sasha Cohen. He had flair, but his showmanship was never shallow.

As I sat down to write this tribute, I called one of those friends – Emma Abraham, a founder of ice-dance.com – to reminisce about those days.

"Rohene wasn't like anybody else," she said. "He looked different. He had a different approach. He wasn't out there just trying to jump – he could do great jumps, but they weren't his focus. Winning wasn't the main thing. You saw him once, and you had to keep seeing him."

Ward placed 14th in Los Angeles, his best result of four trips to senior nationals. His competitive programs had flashes of brilliance, but they weren't as consistent as his practices.

"I thought I was supposed to be the best in competition, in order to have the career I wanted, instead of understanding from childhood I wanted to be a performer," he said. "In order to be a respected performer, I thought I needed to be an Olympian. We're told we're not anything unless we go to the Olympics. So, for me, it was about getting there to be respected. My path was not to be that; I was supposed to be performing, regardless."

His path was always different, ever since getting his first pair of skates from

the Salvation Army when he was seven, growing up in a single mother household in Minneapolis. Financing lessons, ice time, and travel was difficult. Early mentors and coaches, including Gailene Norwood and, later, Richard Zander, his ballet instructor Deirdre A. Kellogg, and Page Lipe, his primary coach throughout most of his career, recognized his enormous talent and helped him endure. But he was a Black competitor in a sport that was predominantly White.

Recently, a prominent coach remarked that if only Ward had trained with him as a youngster, he would have been a world champion.

"That's easy to say, but you have no idea what I really needed," Ward replied.

Ward enjoyed a long, successful career with Holiday on Ice, performing throughout Europe from 2009-2015, and 2017-18. During those years, he also made a name for himself as a choreographer, and began his famous association with Jason Brown, the 2015 U.S. champion, who was a young teenager when Ward began working with him and his then-coach Kori Ade in Chicago area rinks.

"Growing up with Rohene and his influence since I was a young kid, he has introduced me to so many different genres and styles of music and dance," Brown said. "He introduced me to Alvin Ailey and always pushed me to watch different styles of dance from a variety of cultures. It's always amazing to learn from him."

Congratulations, Rohene!

You are a great ice artist
and choreographer

RICHARD
"MR. DEBONAIR"
DWYER



Congratulations, Marni and Rohene!
Thank you for the gift of your skating.

Denise Beaumont

Together, their body of work is astounding. A YouTube of Brown's 2013/2014 free skate to "Reel Around the Sun" from Riverdance went viral, cementing his reputation as a superb showman. Other programs – the entertaining "Room Where It Happens" (from the Broadway hit "Hamilton"); the bravura "Sinnerman"; and Brown's most recent short, an emotionally engaging program set to Alexey Kosenko's "Melancholy" – are equally renowned.

The Professional Skaters Association (PSA) and U.S. Figure Skating (USFS) have three times recognized Ward as choreographer of the year, in 2015, 2017, and 2021, the first Black choreographer to be so honored. He is again nominated this year. His collaboration with Brown has grown and deepened over the years, as Brown grew into maturity and, especially, since he moved to Toronto to train in 2018.

"We talk about being unapologetic about who we are, and living authentically to ourselves, versus being people pleasers," Ward said. "That it's okay for him to be an artist and an athlete, versus an athlete first and then an artist. That it's okay for him not to have quadruple jumps, that he is valued."

Brown was certainly valued, as both an artist and an athlete, this season, when he performed two Ward programs to win a silver medal at the U.S. Championships and

place fifth at the world championships.

"We no longer apologize to people for not doing what others think we should do," Ward said. "We are living our truth. Let the sport be a sport, and let's just see who does the best that day. You know, he's been counted out a lot, and I've been counted out. And over the years we've learned not to care about that, to use that as our fuel."

Ward has choreographed for many other prominent skaters, including two-time world women's champion Kaori Sakamoto; Madison Chock and Evan Bates, 2023 world ice dance champions; and 2022 U.S. women's champion Mariah Bell, among many others.

Sometimes lost in the accolades for his choreography is Ward's coaching career, which began when he was still a competitor himself. Currently, he and his coaching partner Amber Gil train students in Chicago, including Alexa Gasparotto, who competed at the 2023 U.S. Championships and is a new member of USFS's international selection pool, and Nathan Chapple, who represented the U.S. at the 2023 World University Games.

"It's a big deal for me," Chapple told the Chicago Sun Times. "There aren't that many of us out there. It's 2023, and I'm the first Black figure skater at that competition. It should be a really good thing for me, and

people like me."

Both Chapple and Gasparotto, who is Black, are ambassadors for Diversify Ice Foundation, a network that connects skaters of color with coaches and other families in skating. Ward works with the organization, which was founded in 2017 by Joel Savary, a figure skating coach and author of "Why Black and Brown Kids Don't Ice Skate."

"We have some Mexican skaters, we have a little Black girl who is seven, about three or four Asian kids, a Romanian girl, a diverse group," Ward, who also sits on the PSA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee, said. "I reach out to people, try to make them understand inclusivity and that we're a safe place at our rink, that we're here to help them facilitate their journeys."

All this, before Ward's 40th birthday. In a way, he is just getting started.

"When I hear music, I see color first," Ward said of his work. "And then I see someone skating to that through the color. And then, maybe, I see what they would be wearing while they're skating to it, and how powerful they would look. It really is all personal towards the athlete I'm working with at that moment. It's important to understand they all have something different to value."





Dearest Marni,

You inspire us to fly higher and higher!
Thank you for always being our Guardian Angel.

Love,
Peter, Lauren, and Kara,
with Cooper, Carter, Rosie, and Milo

MARNI HALASA

ARTISTRY ON ICE AS A WAY OF LIFE

By Sharon Woolums



When a young Marni Halasa watched Dorothy Hamill skate in the 1976 Olympics, she could never have imagined that that moment was going to change the trajectory of her life. Watching Dorothy skate her long program on TV, Marni leapt off of the furniture and twirled around in her socks, captivated by the Olympic Champion's smile, style, and artistry.

"Dorothy was not only a powerful

technician, her artistry allowed her to emotionally connect with anyone watching her, and that really spoke to me," said Marni. "I wanted to be exactly like her."

All of sudden, gymnastics, ballet, and piano took a back seat to skating, and Marni started to skate every day. She would often forsake family vacations to skate in the rigorous summer camp at the Winterhurst Figure Skating Club in

Lakewood, Ohio. Marni also credits her parents for appreciating that figure skating was a sport that required sacrifice. Driving to the rink at 4:30am for a 5:30am lesson in school figures was no problem for the full-time working parents.

"I was very lucky — my family supported my passion and Cleveland had a thriving skating community. All I had to do was show up and work hard — but I



THE PURPLE TONGUE

eatery . wine bar . social



Congratulations
MARNI HALASA

"The Purple Tongue Restaurant and Wine Bar
in Hells Kitchen salutes Marni for all her
generosity, wisdom, sparkle and support!"

Love
Peter, Otis and the staff

410 WEST 43RD ST. NY, NY 10036 | THEPURPLETONGUENYC.COM | 646.429.8277

Continued from page 17.

never felt it was ‘work’ because I enjoyed it so much,” said Marni.

Even academics couldn’t keep Marni away from the rink. Although she attended Carnegie Mellon University, achieved a law degree from University of Pittsburgh and a Masters from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism — she still went to the rink almost daily. Initially, she was working at the New York Law Journal, but everything seemed to change when Darlene Parent found Marni practicing 8th test paragraph loops on a public session at the former Sky Rink on 33rd Street.

“I saw her tracing those insanely difficult loops and instantly dragged her to the skating school office,” remembers Darlene about the US Figure Skating Double Gold Medalist. “I told her that Sky Rink needed teachers and that we were not going to take ‘no’ for an answer!”

Eventually, Marni realized that she belonged at Sky Rink, not only coaching, but also performing with ITNY, involved in repertory pieces such as “La Revolte Des Enfants” and “Hot Chocolate.” That led her to explore other performing endeavors like rollerblading on America’s Got Talent, bellydancing in “Sex in the City 2,” and skating on floats in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.

“I started to listen to that voice within all of us which asks if you are happy. Whenever I was coaching or performing with ITNY, I was happy. It was sheer delight to immerse yourself in a creative process where your body is the art form. And I started to appreciate the importance of being personally fulfilled,” she said.

That important life lesson also led to Marni creating the Sky Rink All Stars, a theatrical children’s group that has medaled eight years in a row at the United States Figure Skating National Showcase. The team continuously pushes the envelope of what is good theater — using dance, choreography, acting, and props. The team has taught underprivileged children how to skate with ITNY’s outreach program, performed at Johnny Weir’s birthday party, and even placed second at the Coney Island Mermaid Parade.

“It started out very organically. They were all friends that just wanted to skate together. But then something magical started to happen — they became a team with a vision. Often, out of complete chaos, something beautiful can evolve. And I attribute that to the group dynamic. It teaches children the life lesson on how to create and work together,” she said.

Passion did not stop at skating. As an activist, Marni ran for City Council in 2017 and 2021 to help small businesses. Her newest venture is opening Hells Kitchen restaurant/wine bar, The Purple Tongue, with her husband Peter Cecere and Otis Banks. But no matter what other project piques her interest, she is confident she will always have a strong presence at Sky Rink.

“One of my personal goals is to be the next Darlene Parent,” she laughs. “Like Darlene, I don’t think I can ever retire because there is so much more to contribute. Every day, I thank my lucky stars that I am part of this wonderful icy world. Makes me think I must have done something good in a previous life.”



CONGRATULATIONS MARNI.

You are Gay Games figure skating’s
best and brightest ally.

We hope to see you again in Guadalajara
at Gay Games 11 in November!

Laura Moore | Chris Lipari | Wade Corbett



Congrats Marni!
Here’s to nearly 4 decades of
UNFORGETTABLE adventures
and amazing friendship.

Your boundless energy and enthusiasm
are second to none. Love You! Amy

*Congratulations
Jason Brown*



From all of us at,



The Skating Club of New York

is proud to salute

Ice Theatre of New York

and

Honoree

Jason Brown

Choreography Award Winner

Rohene Ward

2023 Alumni Award and SCNY member

Marni Halasa



Thank you, Marni,
for teaching us
artistry on ice
and how to
reach for the stars.

Love,
Juliana Sarich,
Emily Farrell,
Nessie Krim,
Sofia Liu
Sarah Bluberg



Marni,

Your creativity, enthusiasm
and wild side make
everything more fun!

We treasure our supportive
friendship always!

With love,

Bridie Myles
and Elana Siegel



Marni, we celebrate all that you shared as stellar coach and ideal mentor for twelve exciting and beautiful years.

We remain fortunate to consider you a steadfast family friend.

Congratulations and love,
Jennie Berlin & Family



Dearest Marni,

We are so proud of you for having
the courage to follow your dreams.

Love,
Dad, Peter, Malu & Brianna



Thank you, Jason, Rohene and Marni for keeping
our icy world virtuosic, diverse and joyful!

Love, Moira and Company

SILVER PAGE (CENTER SPREAD)



LENA GOTTSCHALL, EVAN CADWELL, RON KRAUT AND ENTIRE PROUD ICE RINK EVENTS TEAM

CONGRATULATES 2023 HONOREES,
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Olympian and U.S. National Champion: Jason Brown,
Choreography Award: Rohene Ward,
Alumni Award: Marni Halasa



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GRAPHIC DESIGN BY LENA GOTTSCHALL



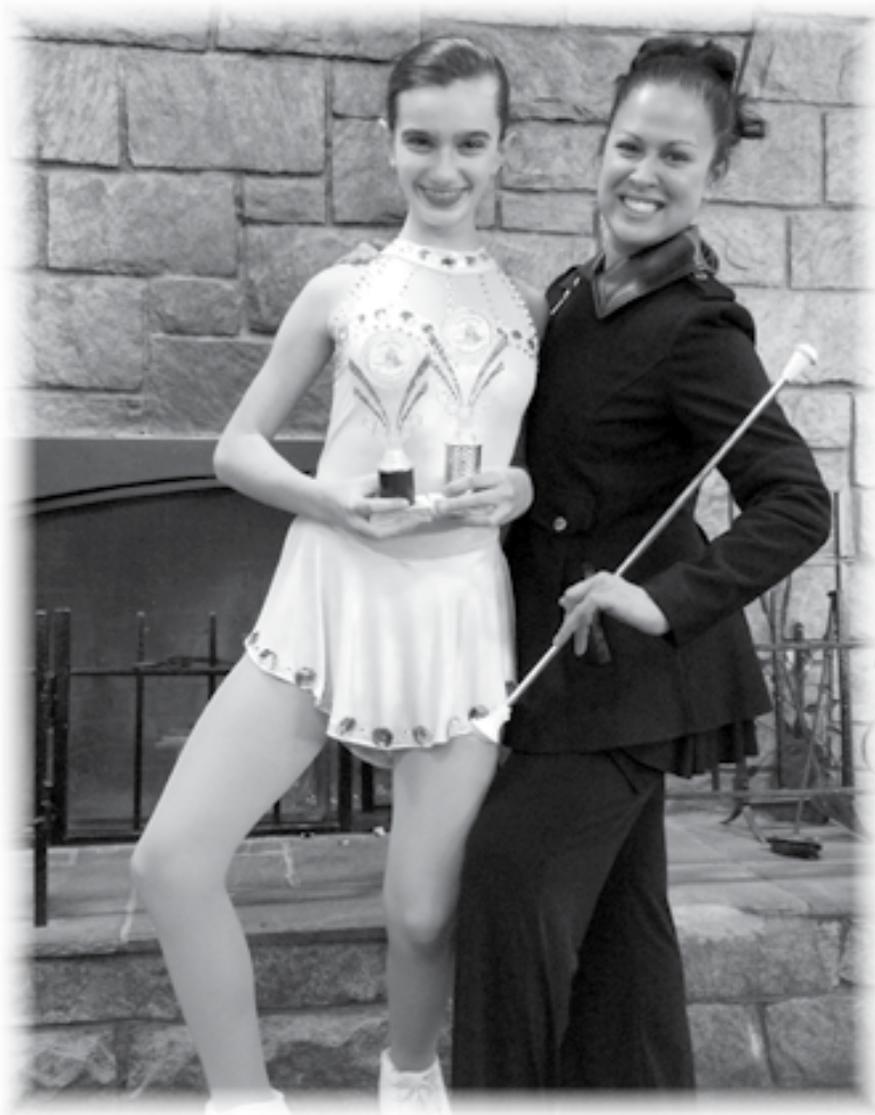
We are so proud of the ITNY Company, and so grateful for the artistry that flows from their incredibly-hard work.

William J. Candee IV, Chair

William J. Candee III, Chair Emeritus

and Family

Photo: Darial Sneed



Important Skating Mantra
for Young Competitors —

Have fun.....And Win!

Thanks, Marni, and congratulations!

Betty & Milly



Dear Marni,
You unapologetically march to the beat of your own drum and we love you for being you!
Your cousins Natasha Katrina Dema and Reem,
and the rest of the 14K Halasa's all over the world!



**"YOU ARE OUR STAR
ON AND OFF THE ICE"**

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HELEN CHAN

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MARIANNE LYNN

SUSAN NEIMAN

MONICA POLLUCK

M. KATHRYN ROBINSON

AIDA SLABOTZKY

SHARON VIZCAINO



Dear Marni,

You are a precious gift to the Sky Rink community,
and we applaud your important work mentoring children.

Bravo!

The Westview News and The Village Sun

Dearest Hot Chocolate-teers!

We made magic wherever our blades took us.
It's been a thrill to trip the light fantastic with you!



Angela Chiang, Helen Hyun-Bowlin, Marni Halasa, Greg Wittrock, Katia Semoukhina, Aidan Daily-Hynes, Bing Yang Liu, Tyrrell Gene, and all the other amazing performers who followed, I love, cherish and salute you!

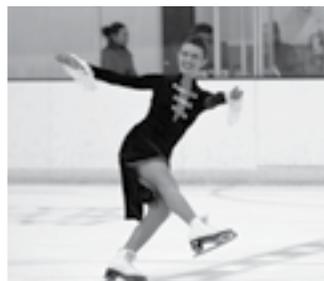
Love, Marni

CONGRATULATIONS ITNY AND ALL TONIGHT'S HONOREES!

Stephen G. Epstein | Edward Z. Epstein



Photo: Simon Russell



Congratulations Milly and the NYU Figure Skating Team.
With thanks to Stacie Krinsky.

— Betty

Congratulations
Jason!

Your skating
is the perfect
combination
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and artistry.

**Kim Cathleen
Millette Verde**
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Jason, Rohene and Marni,

You three have made such an
impact on our world.

Thank you for all your inspiration.

And with great appreciation to
Ice Theatre of New York for
celebrating the joy of dancing on ice!

Randy Gardner



Congratulations, Sarah.
Our hearts are filled with love and awe!

Shel and Laura & MaryAnn



Proud to be affiliated
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OF DANCING ON ICE

Joan Erdheim, PHD

*Congratulations to
Ice Theatre of New York
for another successful season!*

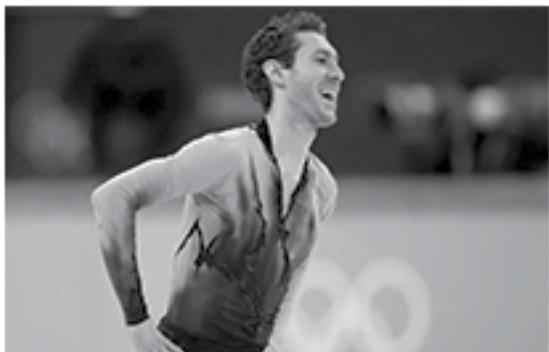


Skyliners Synchronized Skating Team

Thank you, Jirina

For all you do to make
Ice Theatre of New York®
such a fantastic organization.

Judi & Fred Netter



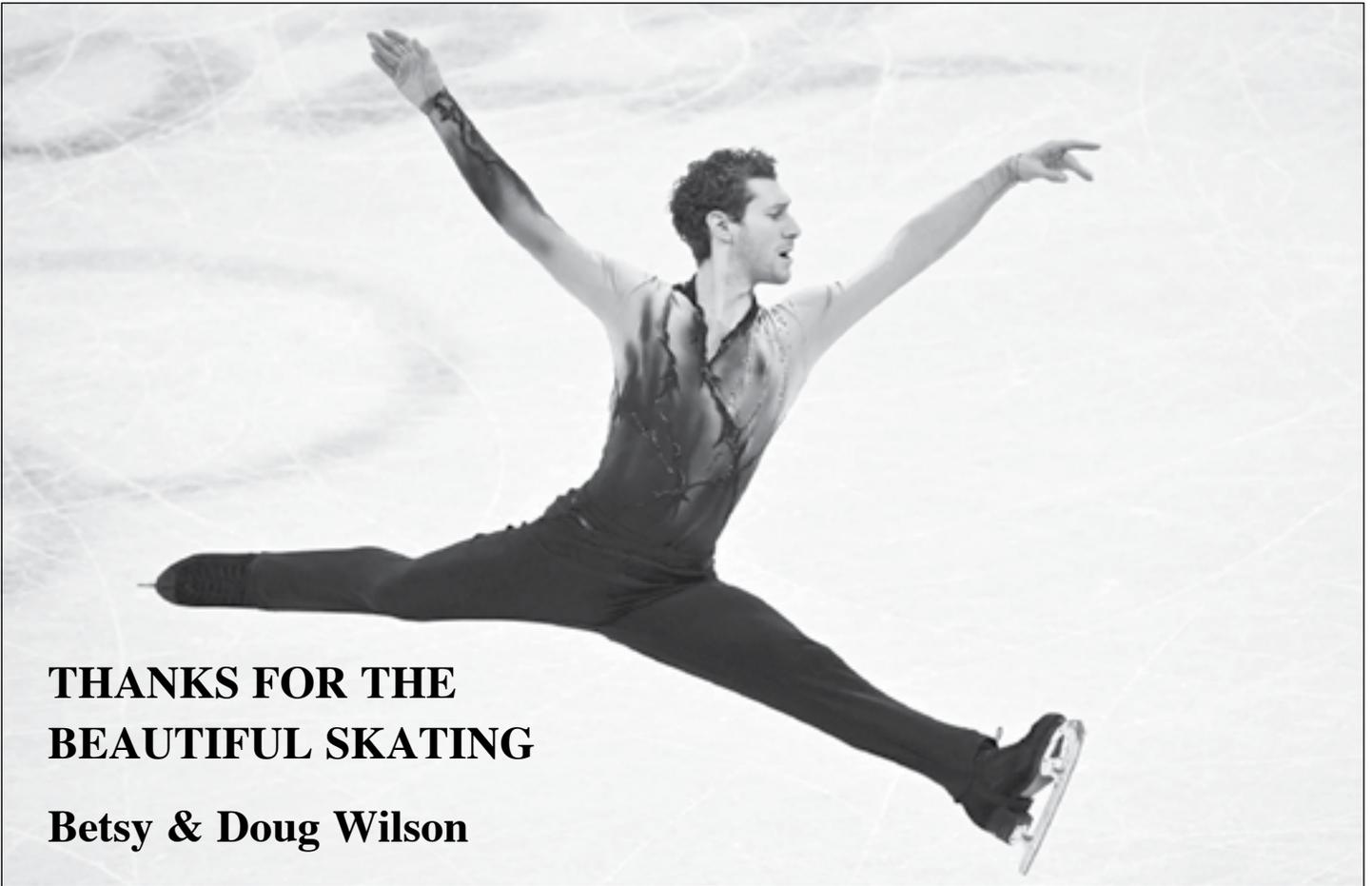
**CONGRATULATIONS
JASON BROWN**

**FROM YOUR
SKOKIE VALLEY SKATING CLUB
FAMILY**



Marni, thanks for bringing
such joy to the ice!
Congratulations.

The Katzman/Ernst Family

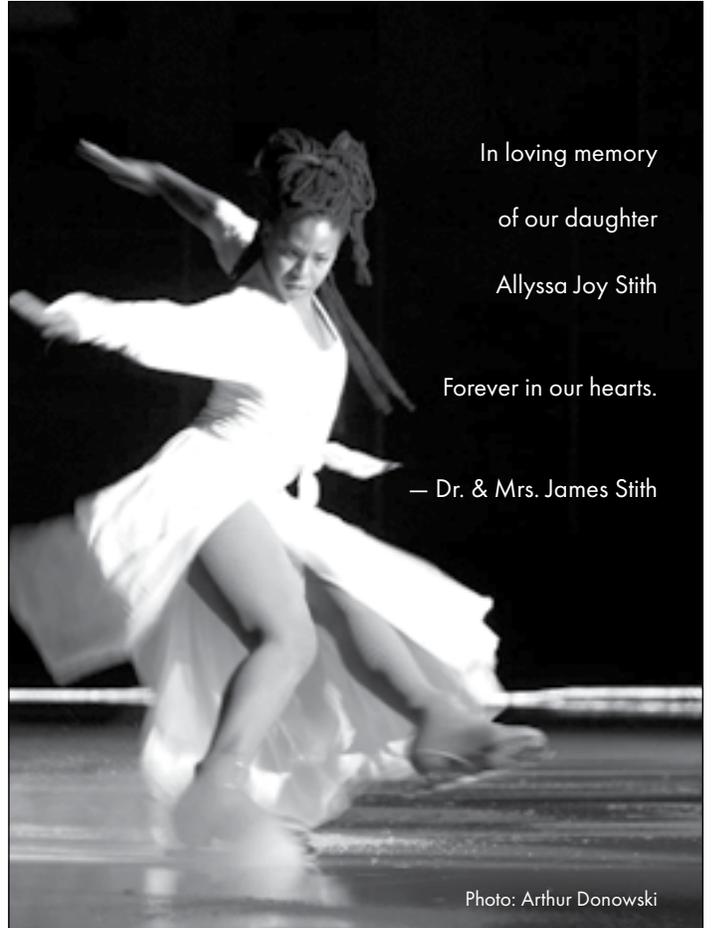


**THANKS FOR THE
BEAUTIFUL SKATING**
Betsy & Doug Wilson



Congratulations, Marni, on your
ITNY honor and for the many years
of our wonderful friendship!

Love always,
Joyce Mola and Fran McMorris



In loving memory
of our daughter
Allyssa Joy Siith

Forever in our hearts.

— Dr. & Mrs. James Siith

Photo: Arthur Donowski



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BLUE RIBBON

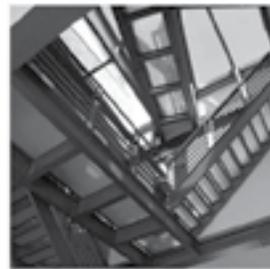
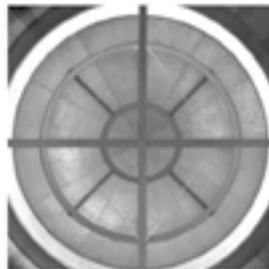
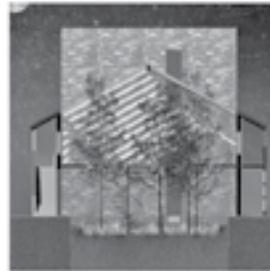
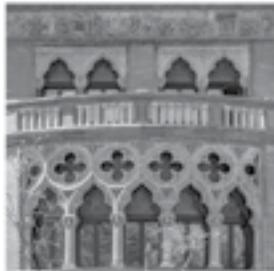
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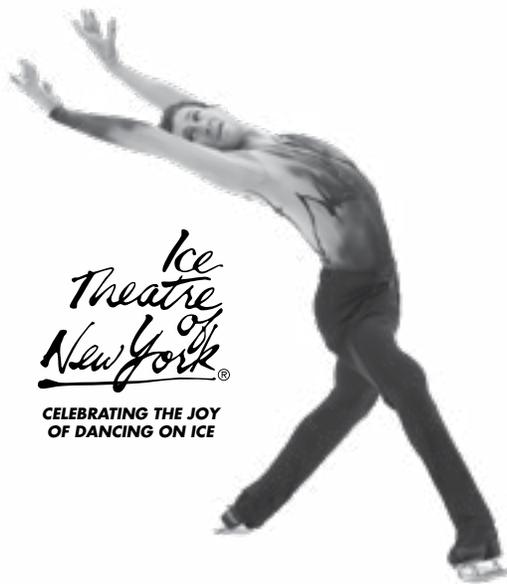
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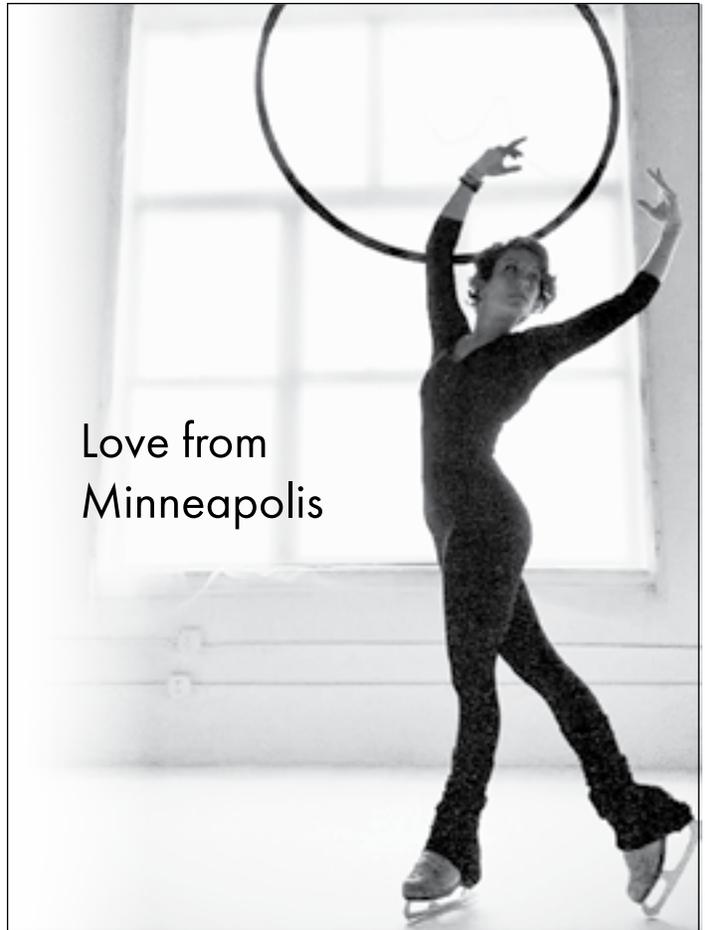
JASON BROWN
2023 HONOREE



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— Maya Angelou

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To Moira,

*When ITNY counts its
blessings —
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Evan Cadwell



Ron Kraut



Congratulations, Marni!

May you continue to inspire young people with your passionate, fun-loving and engaging perspective on the world – as you did with us.

Olive and Susan

Congratulations, Marni



**Your Skating Mother,
Darlene Parent**

We applaud Jason Brown whose talent and artistry has put him in a class of one!

Thank you for loving figure skating as much as you do and thank you for all you have given to the world of figure skating

Rhea Schwartz & Paul Wolff

The Ice House congratulates Ice Theatre of New York



www.icehousenj.com

Thank you JASON for performances we'll never forget!

Thank you ROHENE for ground breaking choreography!

Thank you MARNI for always being a true ice angel!

With much Love,
JoJo Starbuck

JASON AND ROHENE,
CONGRATULATIONS!

I AM SO THRILLED HOW YOUR CREATIVE WORK HAS DEVELOPED. YOU ARE A REFLECTION OF NOT ONLY EACH OTHER BUT ALL THE EXPERIENCES THAT LIFE BRINGS YOU. WISHING YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS!

Sarah Kawahara



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Jason Brown, Olympian, National Champion

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Rohene Ward, US Open Champion - Choreography Award

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Marni Halasa

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SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
to these individuals and others whom we might have missed



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Jason Brown, Oona and Gage Brown, Rohene Ward

YOUTH PERFORMING APPRENTICES

Georgina Blackwell, Caroline Mura, and Milly Wasserman

Thanks to our Ice Theatre volunteers!



I couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you to Ice Theatre of New York,
Chelsea Piers, The Skating Club of New York,
Glitz Entertainment, Sky Rink coaches and
my wonderful students for 30 years of fun.

You inspire me every day!

Love, Marni



Katie Boxwell and Will Sears. Photo: Michelle Harvath

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