



**JOHN H. SALMELA, Ph.D.**  
**A CELEBRATION OF LIFE**  
**08.06.1945-29.10.2014**

### ***The athlete and student***

John H. Salmela, a native of Verdun, Québec, came from humble beginnings and had a successful career as a national level gymnast and a member of university gymnastics teams that won national titles. He also co-captained the Point St-Charles football team to the Canadian juvenile title in 1964. As a student, he attended the University of British Columbia, where he won the R. Tait McKenzie Award for the highest cumulative grade point average. After obtaining his Master's degree at the University of Western Ontario, he studied at the University of Alberta where he completed his Ph.D. in human performance (sport psychology).

### ***The scholar***

John subsequently pursued a 34-year teaching and research career that included positions at Université Laval, Université de Montréal, and the University of Ottawa, where he taught motor development and sport psychology courses in both English and French. Over the years, John's research interests spanned topics such as career development, mental skills assessment, talent identification, the development of expert performance of coaches and athletes, and the role of families in this process. After a world sabbatical tour in 1981, he wrote *The World Sport Psychology Sourcebook*, which defined the field at that time and has been updated with two subsequent editions. He has authored/edited 20 books and written 250 articles, both in academic journals and for professional audiences.

After taking early retirement in Canada in 1999, he relocated to Belo Horizonte, Brazil where he taught in Portolish (a combination of Portuguese and English) as an invited professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Always looking for opportunities to write and help other colleagues, he also implemented a copy editing service in English for Brazilian scholars. John was still active and collaborating with scholars, coaches and athletes from all corners of the globe up until his passing.

Professionally, John served on various international editorial boards of scientific and professional journals, most prominently as Co-editor of the *International Journal of Sport Psychology* (1987-1995). From 1985-1995, he was the sport psychology consultant for the Canadian men's national gymnastics team where he participated in three World Championships and one Olympic Games. He trained Iranian sport psychology consultants and accompanied the Iranian delegation to the 2006 Asian Games in Doha, Qatar as the team's consultant. He also served for 16 years on the Managing Council of the International Society of Sport Psychology, including as Vice-President from 1989-1993. He wrote the three level sport psychology curriculum for the International Gymnastics Federation.

John received the International Society of Sport Psychology *Honor Award* (1993), The Sports Medicine Council of Canada Certificate of *Recognition of Dedicated Service* (1997), the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology *Fellow Award* and the FIG International *Coaching Brevet* (2003).

### ***The supervisor***

John supervised 41 Master's and 12 Ph.D. students, crafting an invigorating and refreshing learning environment with his unique and efficient teaching and coaching style. He has left a legacy for being passionate about research, and his graduate students will always remember him for his ability to “listen, challenge, and support” and for his famous inspirational phrase, “Poor is the student who does not surpass his master.” While John was known for being a straight shooter and for calling a spade a spade, he was also extremely caring, supportive, and generous with his time and effort to provide students with the conditions they required to succeed. His students agreed that his passion and provocative way to challenge the status quo fired them up and created the foundation they needed to push the boundaries, advance knowledge, and innovate. John had a brilliant mind and taught his students the fine art of critical thinking and global mindedness. He supervised several international students and mentored scholars from developing countries, making them feel right at home during their stay in Canada. John would say during the first day of class, “Look around, some of these people will be your friends for life” and he was right. That was the magic of Salmela, he didn't only teach students about science, he taught them about life. And that is why for many students, he was one of the best teachers they ever had.

### ***The father, husband, and friend***

Perhaps most will remember John as the person he was. John was a loving father, husband, brother, son, friend, and colleague. His son Max and wife Luci Fuscaldi Teixeira were the loves of his life. With pride, he beamed as he often shared Max and Luci's accomplishments with friends and colleagues. John and Luci were an admirable couple, radiating affection and respect for one another. They welcomed many people in their cherished home in Belo Horizonte, Brazil where they raised two Labrador retrievers, Forrest and Felix.

Indeed, many have memories of John as an extraordinary bon vivant. He loved to have a good laugh and life was never dull in his company. Everyone who has spent time with John has a great Salmela story to tell - from debating his idol Mag dog Vachon to swimming in Lac Gatineau at freezing point, to crawling out of windows, these stories are sure to make your belly ache from laughter, and your heart ache with nostalgia because in telling the story, you are inevitably reminded of how much you miss him. You miss him because the greatest gift John gave those who were fortunate enough to cross his path, was that of friendship. He had an enormous heart and he looked out for his people. John loved us and we loved him back. That is why he will be so greatly missed.

*- Written by Natalie Durand-Bush, Jean Côté, and Gordon Bloom -  
Thank you to everyone who shared positive thoughts and memories of John*