



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**COMMUNITY TO HONOUR LATE B.C. HOCKEY LEGEND ERNIE "PUNCH" MCLEAN WITH PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF LIFE AT QUEENS PARK ARENA**

**NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. (June 17, 2026)** — The Ernie Punch McLean Legacy Foundation, in coordination with the McLean family, is inviting the public to a Celebration of Life for legendary New Westminster Bruins coach Ernie "Punch" McLean. **The memorial event will take place on Thursday, July 9, 2026, at Queens Park Arena**, offering fans, former players, and community members a chance to pay their final respects.

McLean, one of British Columbia's most iconic and revered hockey figures, tragically passed away in a motor vehicle accident in northern B.C. on May 8, 2026, at the age of 93. **His sudden passing occurred just two days after he proudly attended a public press conference at the arena launching a campaign to erect a permanent bronze statue in his honour.**

During his legendary coaching career, McLean shaped the lives of countless young athletes both on and off the ice. Under his fiery and passionate leadership, the Bruins won four consecutive WHL championships, appeared in four straight Memorial Cup finals, and claimed back-to-back national titles in 1977 and 1978, with more than 100 players eventually advancing to the NHL.

"We offer our deepest sympathies and condolences to all friends of Ernie throughout Canada, British Columbia, and especially the province of Saskatchewan and the Estevan area where Ernie was from," said Patrick Singh, Director of the Ernie Punch McLean Legacy Foundation. "Two days after we had launched our campaign with the city and the media to have a statue built in Ernie's name, he was taken from us sadly, but that just strengthens our resolve to get this done more than ever."

**The memorial service will be hosted by BC sports broadcaster Farhan Lalji.** The ceremony will also feature a special musical tribute by the Legion Centennial Pipes and Drums from New Westminster Legion Branch 2.

The Foundation is encouraging the public to attend. **In lieu of flowers, attendees and supporters are invited to contribute to the ongoing statue and scholarship fund at [punchlegacy.com](http://punchlegacy.com)** to ensure McLean's monumental impact on the region is cemented forever

## **CELEBRATION OF LIFE DETAILS:**

- **What:** Public Memorial Service for Ernie “Punch” McLean
- **When:** Thursday, July 9, 2026
- **Time:** Doors open to the public at 10:00 a.m. | Service commences at 11:00 a.m.
- **Where:** Queens Park Arena, New Westminster, B.C.
- **Who:** Hosted by Farhan Lalji, featuring music by the Legion Centennial Pipes and Drums (Branch 2), with remarks from alumni, dignitaries, and foundation directors.

Members of the media are warmly invited to attend and cover the memorial.

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### **About the Ernie Punch McLean Legacy Foundation**

The Ernie Punch McLean Legacy Foundation is a British Columbia non-profit society (Incorporation Number S0084610) dedicated to honouring the legacy of Ernie "Punch" McLean. The Foundation continues to raise funds for a permanent bronze statue in New Westminster and a scholarship fund in his name. For more information, to leave a tribute, or to donate, visit **[punchlegacy.com](http://punchlegacy.com)**.

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