

# SPORTS

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## spotlight story

VICTOR DAVIS STORY a candid look at Olympian's swimming career and final days before hit-and-run death

# Film celebrates pool legend's life



DAVE STUBBS

The call came just after 6 a.m., 17 years ago this Remembrance Day morning.

"Vic's been in an accident," Clifford Barry told me. "And it doesn't look good."

For the next two days, with family and friends standing vigil at Notre Dame Hospital, Barry remained at the intensive-care bedside of Victor Davis, the swimmer he had coached to three world records and four Olympic medals, including gold in the 200-metre breaststroke at Los Angeles in 1984.

Davis, 25, never regained consciousness. He died Nov. 13, 1989 of a fractured skull suffered when he was struck and thrown 18 metres by a hit-and-

*"Vic and his teammates wanted to prove to the world that Canadians could win."*

run driver in Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Mel Davis and Leona Heyens saw to it that their son's death would provide life and meaning to others. The swimmer's heart, liver, kidneys and two cornea were harvested for successful transplant; the Victor Davis Memorial Award was later established to provide bursaries to needy Canadian swimmers, and more than 55 athletes have benefited since its creation.

Next March, Davis's remarkable life, death and legacy will be remembered in Victor: The Victor Davis Story, a two-hour movie to be telecast on CBC.

Now in post-production, the film stars in the title role former Pointe Claire swimmer

Mark Lutz, who long has dreamed of bringing to the screen the story of a childhood swim hero.

Lutz is best known for his role as Groosalugg on the WB television series Angel. His other credits include Friends, E.R., La Femme Nikita and Queer as Folk.

The actor spent nearly five years interviewing those who knew Davis best, securing the rights, writing and rewriting and shopping the screenplay, and finally working himself into the finest shape of his life to play an athlete legendary for his energy and Greek-god physique.

The \$4-million film explores Davis's life from 1982-84, from his first world record through his Los Angeles Olympic victory, and then the final three days of his life.

"I was totally thrilled that Mark wanted to do this," said Mel Davis, who opened to Lutz his son's life, blemishes and all.

"I hope it will inspire some kids. Vic and his teammates wanted to prove to the world that Canadians could win. They were tired of being third or fourth."

To Davis, second place was always the first loser.

We were friends through the 1980s, during my days as communications director for Swimming Canada, travelling much of the world together. I coached him on working with media and sponsors, helping him file off at least a few of his rough edges.

In the end, I reported on Davis's death, eulogized him at his funeral at the request of his parents, and was honoured to fulfill his family's wishes that I take his cremated remains to New Zealand, where in 1981 he had won his first international gold medal. During the 1990 Commonwealth Games, I arranged to have his ashes scattered in the Pacific Ocean, in the lee of volcanic Rangitoto Island.

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BRIAN GAVRILLOFF CANWEST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO

Victor Davis, killed by a hit-and-run driver in 1989, set three world records and won four Olympic medals, including gold in the 200-metre breaststroke (above) at the 1984 Games in Los Angeles.

## Bogus arrest a blessing in disguise



JACK TODD

on racial profiling of Als players

*"This time, the cops pulled over athletes with enough profile to get media attention."*

The incident has overshadowed an entire week of preparation for a football game. Two Alouettes, defensive-end Alain Kashama and cornerback Mark Estelle, were driving on Notre Dame St. around 8 p.m. Monday when Kashama allegedly failed to signal a turn.

Oh, yes. And his windows were overly tinted. Tsk-tsk.

By the time the smoke cleared, Kashama was facing possible charges of assault and uttering threats and Estelle was arrested for obstructing justice.

In less time than it takes to say "racial profiling," the charges were dropped — a tacit admission by the police department that the whole thing was bogus.

It might have ended there except that Kashama had his dander up. He retained Raphael Schachter, a longtime acquaintance of mine, to look into it and see whether Kashama's rights had been violated.

The Alouettes' party line is that it's a pity the incident drained attention from tomorrow's CFL East final between the Als and the Argos — but the truth is that for Montreal's black community, the whole thing is a blessing in disguise.

This time, the men who were pulled over were athletes with enough profile to get some media attention. This time, justice was done and the bogus charges were thrown out. This time, the whole country gets to see what happens in every city on this continent day in and night out — and the fact that it happens less often in Montreal than in any other major city on this continent is no excuse.

Here's the question: Two white men are driving an SUV with heavily tinted windows in Hampstead. The driver fails to use a turn signal. Are they pulled over? You know the answer to that question. This is Quebec, for the love of Jacques Villeneuve.

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Alouettes' Belli happy to leave Steeltown in rearview, Page D5  
Argonauts should be favoured, Als corner Sanchez says, Page D5

## BY THE NUMBERS



**64** Tiger Woods's course record-tying score yesterday at the HSBC Champions tournament in Shanghai, China, where he pulled within two shots of leader Jyoti Randhawa. Story, Page D6

**67** Score for Chris Baryla of Vernon, B.C., to share the Nationwide Tour Championship lead. With a victory, he will earn a 2007 PGA Tour card.

# Leafs rivalry has special meaning for Habs' Johnson

'It's a chance for me to play in front of my family and friends,' T.O. native says of Hall game

PAT HICKEY THE GAZETTE

TORONTO — Mike Johnson isn't surprised by the Toronto Maple Leafs' strong showing this season.

"I know there were some question marks before the season started, but I think they've answered a lot of those questions," Johnson said as the Canadiens prepared to meet the Leafs here tonight (7 p.m., CBC, RDS, CJAD Radio-800).

One of those questions was about goaltending and it popped up again after Andrew Raycroft suffered a groin injury Thursday in the Leafs' 6-4 win over Boston.

The Leafs are optimistically listing Raycroft as "day-to-day," but he won't play tonight. That means Jean-Sébastien Aubin will start tonight. The Leafs are expected to recall Mikael Tellqvist as the backup.

Raycroft joins an injury list

that also includes captain Mats Sundin, who is out 3-4 weeks with an elbow injury.

"Losing key players hurts, but that's part of the game," Johnson said. "It's the teams that can work through the injuries that will be successful. It's just like our situation with Chris (Higgins)."

Johnson noted that new head coach Paul Maurice has done a good job fitting his system to a veteran cast of players.

"I skated with a lot of those guys during the summer and they all felt they were going to have a good season," Johnson said.

The Canadiens-Leafs rivalry is the oldest in the NHL and it has special meaning for Johnson. He is a Toronto native who still makes his offseason home there and it's also where he began his NHL career with the Leafs.

While there are only a handful of former teammates on the Leafs' roster, Johnson said the



KARL DEBLAKER ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It's a chance for me to play in front of my family and friends," Habs' Mike Johnson, a Toronto native, says of facing Leafs tonight.

games are still special.

"It's a chance for me to play in front of my family and friends, and there will be some added excitement in this game because it's Hall of Fame weekend," he said.

The Canadiens and the Leafs have met twice this season and each team picked up a shootout win on the road. The Leafs are four points up on the Habs in the

Northeast Division, but that number is deceiving because the Leafs have played four more games.

The Canadiens will be playing in Ottawa Monday, when former Canadiens Patrick Roy and Dick Duff are inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame, but the festivities leading to the induction have forced some changes in the Habs' schedule.

They practised earlier than usual at the Bell Centre yesterday before catching an early-afternoon charter. After checking into their hotel, the players went to the Hall, where they signed autographs for 90 minutes.

Head coach Guy Carbonneau scrapped today's morning skate because the Toronto Marlies and the Hamilton Bulldogs, the Canadiens' No. 1 farm team, are meeting in a rare American Hockey League game at the Air Canada Centre this afternoon.

The Leafs' practice facility, Lakeshore Arena, was available, but Carbonneau decided against the 20-minute bus ride.

"All this stuff could be seen as a distraction, but only if you let it become a distraction," Carbonneau said. "Taking an hour out to sign autographs isn't going to throw us off."

Tonight's game kicks off a road trip that will see the Canadiens play four games in six nights. They are in Ottawa Monday and then travel to Tampa Wednesday and Florida Thursday.

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