

A Brief History



**Dr.
Richard
Porter**

In 1957, at an evening session of the Ann Arbor Figure Skating Club's senior division, Dr. Richard Porter, observing some teenage girls on the ice trying to choreograph steps and moves, developed his idea of a precision chorus team. He was watching returning members of the big chorus from the previous year's ice show who were invited to get together to find out what they could do. This was the beginning of the first-ever precision skating team, the Hockettes.

Within a few months the Hockettes had two numbers to perform at University hockey games. By the next year they had an official hour of practice each week and a designated coach. Tryouts in front of US Figure Skating judges who evaluated their performances soon followed. Over the next few years the Hockettes made guest appearances at shows put on by other clubs, were written up in *SKATING* magazine in 1961, and shown on film to the US Figure Skating Governing Council. This publicity was followed by appearances in the World Champions' Tour, the Lake Placid International Festival, on center ring in the Shrine Circus, and at the US Figure Skating's 50th anniversary show "Champions on Ice." The Hockettes have opened the AAFSC Melody on Ice Annual Show every year since 1957.

The popularity of this competitive team sport has continued to evolve nationally and internationally. The first official Synchronized Skating World Championship was held in Minneapolis in April 2000. It is now vying for a berth as an Olympic sport.

Synchronized skating as a team sport may have been the vision of one man, but it required the efforts of many people. The most important and uncredited person is Richard Porter's wife, Pat. Pat was the strength and guiding force behind Dick Porter and the Hockettes. She would sit up to all hours of the night listening to music with him to find the right piece. Then she would design the costumes and accessories, arrange for dressmakers, make travel plans, etc. etc. — do all the things team managers do now. She was the team's best "mother hen." The Porter's three daughters, Carol, Anne, and Sue were all Hockettes.

