



*She***IS** *THE* *FUTURE*

A NIGHT CHAMPIONING WOMEN IN SPORTS



SPORTS NETWORK

ABOUT THE GALA

Welcome to the **ShelS Gala**, a flagship event dedicated to celebrating the incredible power and potential of women and girls in sport.

This high-profile evening offers a unique opportunity to connect with athletes, business leaders, policymakers, and changemakers from across Canada and the U.S. The Gala will showcase the **ShelS** platform and its ambitious vision to re-shape the future of women's sport through groundbreaking innovation, increased visibility, and a powerful community.

A NIGHT CHAMPIONING WOMEN IN SPORTS.



EVENING SCHEDULE

WELCOME TO THE 2025 SHEIS GALA



- 5:00 PM – VIP Reception
– Guest Arrival & Red Carpet Doors open.

- 6-6:30 PM – Gala Opening video and welcome: **Lauren Howe**
– Welcome from the Government of Ontario, **MPP Natalie Pierre**
– Welcome to Burlington: **Mayor Marianne Meed Ward**
– Gala Co-Chairs Welcome
– Founder's Remarks **Brenda Andress**, CEO & Founder, **SheIs**
– Remarks by Honorary Patron:
Her Honour **Elizabeth Dowdeswell**, LG, Ontario (2014-2023)
– Remarks by Honorary Patron: **Diana Fox Carney**

Main course is served

- 7:45 PM – Introduction to Tulip Girls
8:35 PM – Closing Remarks
9:00 PM – Celebration & Networking

BRENDA ANDRESS



**WE'RE
CHANGING
THE GAME,
BUILDING A
COMMUNITY**

SheIS, founded by Brenda Andress in 2019, is the first non-profit to unite professional leagues, organizations and athletes in support of one mission: Using the power of sports to create a future of, by, and for strong women.

Andress is a trailblazer in women's sports, known and awarded globally for her strategic leadership and innovative vision.

Through her work, she is creating a future that both recognizes and celebrates women's athletic achievements.

*Winner of the 2025 Global Sports award
Women Changing The World*

HONORARY PATRON
**DIANA FOX
CARNEY**



Diana Fox Carney is an economist and environmental advocate whose career spans global development, climate policy, and progressive think tanks. With master's degrees from the University of Oxford and the University of Pennsylvania, she has worked on agricultural research in Africa, led carbon pricing initiatives in Canada, and advised on climate strategies at the Eurasia Group. Passionate about social equity and

environmental sustainability, Diana has served on the boards of international charities and supports efforts that create a healthier future for people and planet. She's also an accomplished athlete — once scoring a hat trick for Oxford — and a committed community builder, ceramicist, and mother of four. Whether in policy, sport, or sustainability, Diana brings intelligence, energy, and compassion to every space she enters.

HONORARY PATRON
**ELIZABETH
DOWDESWELL**



The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell served as Ontario's longest-standing Lieutenant Governor (2014–2023), where she became known as the province's "Storyteller-in-Chief." A lifelong public servant and global thinker, her mandate focused on sustainability and strengthening democracy. Her distinguished career spans education, environment, culture, and international leadership, including serving as Under

Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme. She was also the founding CEO of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. An Officer of the Order of Canada and member of the Order of Ontario, she holds 11 honorary doctorates and continues to champion an inclusive, informed, and resilient society.

STAR ATHLETE
**SAMI JO
SMALL**



HOCKEY PLAYER

Sami Jo Small has led high-performing teams for over three decades — from the Olympic podium to corporate boardrooms. A three-time Olympian (2 gold, 1 silver), five-time World Champion, and two-time MVP in women's ice hockey, she knows what it takes to succeed under pressure. A Stanford-educated Mechanical Engineer and Certified Speaking Professional, Sami Jo is a global keynote speaker who uses powerful storytelling to inspire stronger,

more connected teams. Her core message: *"In life, we don't always get to choose the role we play, but we always get to choose how we play it."* She's also a best-selling author (*The Role I Played*), a sports analyst, and founder of a hockey school that has empowered young athletes for over 25 years — blending experience, empathy, and energy in everything she does.

STAR ATHLETE
**CAROLINE
VEYRE**



PROFESSIONAL BOXER

Caroline Veyre is a WBC Silver Champion, Olympian, and fierce advocate for women in sport. Born in France and raised in Quebec, her boxing journey began after her family relocated following her mother's breast cancer surgery. Choosing her own path, Caroline embraced the boxing world — a choice that soon shaped her identity. Now, with over 20 years in the ring, she is known for her resilience, discipline, and

heart. As a professional athlete on the global stage, she uplifts others by mentoring young athletes and championing authenticity in sport. Representing Canada internationally, Caroline's mission goes beyond titles — it's about showing girls everywhere that strength, setbacks, and self-belief go hand in hand. She's not just fighting for wins — she's fighting for what matters.

A photograph of Jolie Krebs, a female Ultimate Frisbee player, in mid-air. She is wearing a dark blue jersey with a white and red logo that says 'NY GL'. She is holding a white frisbee in her right hand, ready to throw it. The background is dark blue with a large, stylized, glowing purple and pink graphic element that resembles a letter 'S' or a swoosh. The text 'STAR ATHLETE' is in a small, purple, sans-serif font, and 'JOLIE KREBS' is in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font, both positioned to the left of the player.

STAR ATHLETE
**JOLIE
KREBS**

PREMIER ULTIMATE LEAGUE PLAYER

Jolie Krebs is a rising star in Ultimate Frisbee. She led Binghamton University to four consecutive College National Championship appearances and, in her senior year, earned the prestigious Callahan Award, was named National College Offensive Player of the Year, and selected as a First-Team All-American.

Jolie captained Team USA to gold at the 2024 Under-24 World Championships and was named 2025 PUL MVP after helping New York Gridlock win the league. Whether dominating on the field or mentoring young players, Jolie is a force—embodying leadership, grit, and the power of persistence.

STAR ATHLETE
**Dr. SASHA
GOLLISH**



ATHLETICS | RUNNER

Dr. Sasha Gollish, PEng, PhD, ChPC is a national team middle- and long-distance runner who won bronze at the 2015 Pan Am Games. A certified coach, civil engineer, and researcher, she blends science and sport to champion gender equity in athletics. Sasha serves as Director of Community Engagement and Knowledge Mobilization at the University

of Toronto's Mental Health and Physical Activity Research Centre, leading inclusive sport and well-being initiatives. She co-founded Yellow Running Shoes and created Unstoppable, a mental performance journal helping athletes build confidence, focus, and resilience—on and off the field.

STAR ATHLETE
**SERITA
THURTON**



FORWARD / AJAX, ONTARIO

Serita Thurton brings international experience and NCAA strength to the Wild lineup. A two-time Concacaf bronze medalist with Canada's U17 and U20 teams, she also earned 58 NCAA Division I starts with the University of South Florida. She made her national team debut at 15, competing in the FIFA U17 and U20

Women's World Cups and helping Canada earn podium finishes at both Concacaf championships. Over five seasons at USF, she tallied three goals and five assists, playing a key role in the program's AAC regular season and tournament titles.

STAR ATHLETE
**ARIEL
LEE**

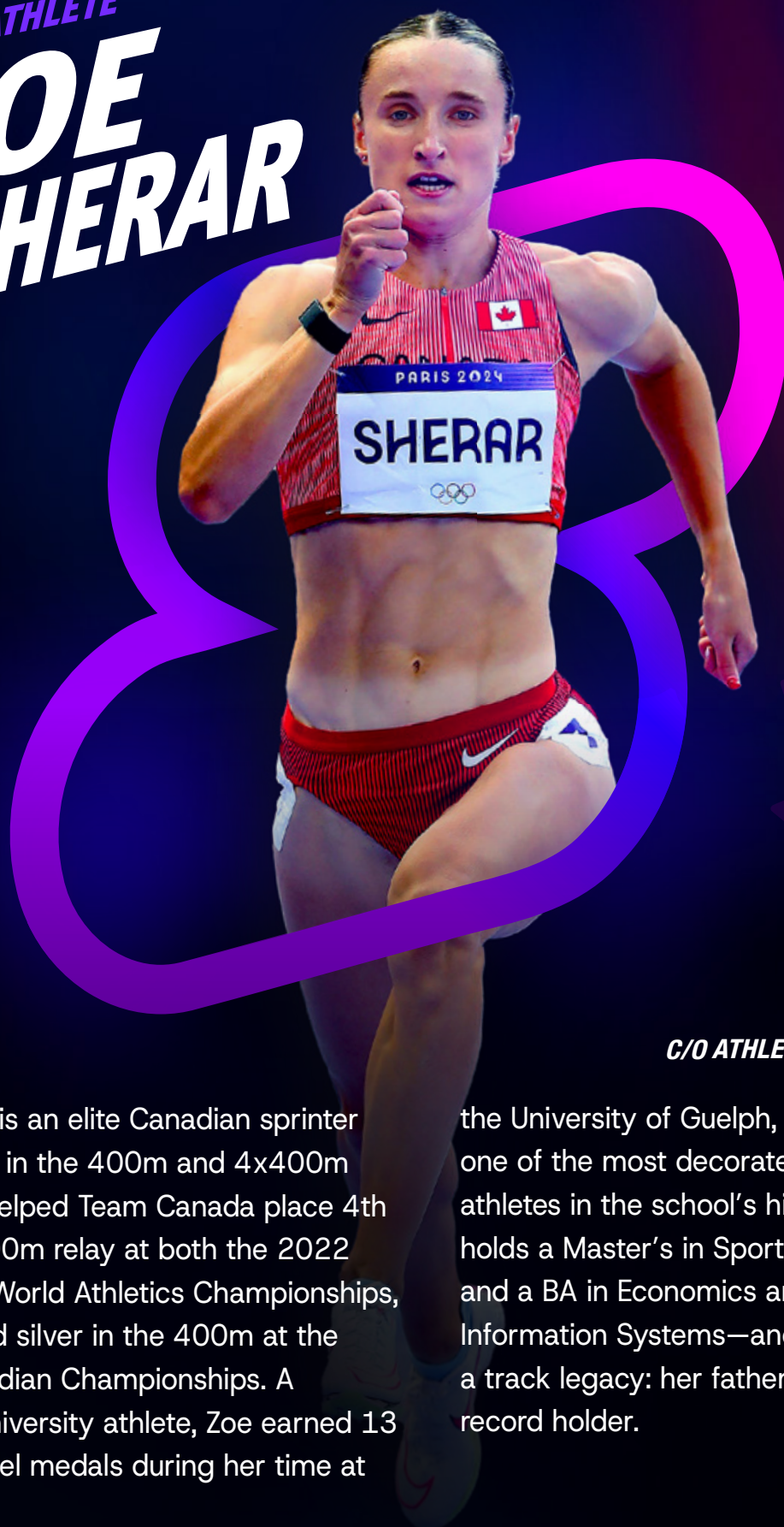


MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPION

Ariel Lee is a Junior World Champion martial artist and passionate advocate for girls in sport. A multi-time National and Provincial Champion, Ariel has represented Canada in five countries and earned four WAKO World Championship medals. She began martial arts at age four and holds a 2nd-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do, with advanced training

in Bo Staff. Ariel teaches self-defense in diverse communities, including Indigenous reserves, and serves as an instructor at Desantos Martial Arts. Off the mat, she's a high school athlete who plays rugby and basketball—balancing fierce discipline with vibrant leadership and a drive to uplift others.

STAR ATHLETE
**ZOE
SHERAR**



C/O ATHLETICS CANADA

Zoe Sherar is an elite Canadian sprinter specializing in the 400m and 4x400m relay. She helped Team Canada place 4th in the 4x400m relay at both the 2022 and 2023 World Athletics Championships, and claimed silver in the 400m at the 2023 Canadian Championships. A standout university athlete, Zoe earned 13 national-level medals during her time at

the University of Guelph, making her one of the most decorated female athletes in the school's history. She holds a Master's in Sport Management and a BA in Economics and Geographic Information Systems—and comes from a track legacy: her father is a national record holder.

STAR ATHLETE
**FAVOUR
OKPALI**



TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE

Favour Okpali is a Canadian track athlete, the 2025 OUA Athlete of the Year, and a graduate student in Software Engineering at Western University. With a deep appreciation for everything sport has taught her, Favour is passionate about

helping girls and women find confidence and community through athletics. She proudly supports Shels and its mission to create lasting, positive change for women in sport.

UNLEASHING THE TRUE POWER OF WOMEN IN SPORTS



LEADERS & FOUNDERS

DIANA MATHESON



***FOUNDER & CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER /
NORTHERN SUPER LEAGUE***

Diana Matheson is a two-time Olympic bronze medalist and one of Canada's most influential soccer figures. From 2003–2021, she earned over 200 caps, competing in four FIFA World Cups and three Olympic Games — including scoring the bronze medal-winning goal at London 2012. She co-founded the Players' Association for Canada's Women's

National Team and later earned an EMBA from Smith School of Business and a UEFA Master for International Players. In 2022, she co-founded Project 8 Sports and now serves as Founder & Chief Growth Officer of the Northern Super League — Canada's first women's pro soccer league.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS

Dr. RENA ELEAZAR



***DIRECTOR OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE /
NEW YORK GRIDLOCK ULTIMATE***

Dr. Rena Eleazar is a Doctor of Physical Therapy, Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Sports Physical Therapy, and a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist through the NSCA. With over a decade of experience and a private practice in New York City, she supports athletes through injury rehab and into peak performance. As Director of Sports Performance for New York Gridlock Ultimate, Rena

integrates her expertise to elevate athlete care for women and non-binary players. Her work draws on past experience with elite organizations like the Brooklyn Nets and New Jersey Devils, ensuring Gridlock athletes receive the same high-level support — on and off the field. Rena is dedicated to building a more equitable and empowered future for athletes in Ultimate and beyond.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS
**KATIA
BANEL**



**MANAGER AND FOUNDER /
SWEETSCIENCE MGT**

Katia Banel is a fierce advocate for women's boxing and a connector between the worlds of sport and business. After starting her career managing coaches and applying performance principles in corporate spaces, she found her true calling in boxing. Katia has worked closely with Olympians and elite female fighters,

helping them navigate the professional landscape while securing global opportunities, sponsorships, and visibility. Rejecting hypersexualization, she champions their strength and skill, advocating for lasting equity in the sport. Her mission: to ensure women's boxing earns the respect, recognition, and opportunities it deserves.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS

DEANNA ZUMWALT



**FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE
CHAIR, CALGARY WILD FC**

Deanna Zumwalt is a visionary business leader and fierce advocate for women's sports. As Executive Chair of Calgary Wild FC — one of six founding teams in the Northern Super League, Canada's first professional women's soccer league — she's leading a movement that's reshaping the sporting landscape. With experience as CEO of Coril Holdings Ltd. and deep ties to community organizations including the Governor General's Canadian Leadership

Conference and Platform Calgary, Deanna blends strategic acumen with a passion for social impact. Her leadership is breaking barriers and building a bold new future for women and girls — uniting communities, empowering young leaders, and driving a powerful legacy both on and off the pitch. From the boardroom to the field, Deanna is helping bring the "Call of the Wild" to life — and Canada's soccer future with it.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS
**SARAH
JORDAN**



**DEALS PARTNER, INVESTOR,
BOARD MEMBER & TEAM OWNER
AFC TORONTO**

Sarah Jordan is a purpose-driven leader with deep expertise in retail, finance, and private equity. A Deals Partner at PwC Canada, she advises midmarket companies and funds. As CEO of Mastermind Toys, she led a brand transformation that earned Canada's Brand of the Year and Best Managed Companies honors. Previously,

she was SVP at Scotiabank and a Partner at BCG. Sarah is a co-owner of AFC Toronto and an investor in multiple women-led ventures. She serves on the boards of Canada Soccer Foundation and Ingenium Foundation, and is a champion for youth, women, and purpose-driven innovation.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS

LAURA ARMSTRONG



**3X WORLD CHAMPION TURNING
LEADERS INTO CHAMPIONS**

Laura Armstrong is a 3X World Champion Martial Artist, Grandmaster in Filipino Martial Arts, and 4th Dan in Aikido with over 35 years of experience. As Founder/CEO of Leadership with Laura and Wealth Mastery Systems, she empowers entrepreneurs to unlock financial freedom through mindset, leadership, and communication. A National Martial Arts Coach for over 20 years, Laura

teaches empowerment-based self-defense in settings from boardrooms to prisons. A certified Reiki Master and licensed holistic practitioner, she blends ancient wisdom with modern strategy. Laura is certified by ESD Global and IMPACT, and serves globally as a bold, compassionate leader helping others access power, wealth, and confidence.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS

GORD GRACE



***PRESIDENT & CEO,
ONTARIO UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS***

Gord is the long-standing President & CEO of Ontario University Athletics (OUA), where he has spent over a decade driving programs, performance, and partnerships across the university sports landscape. With over 25 years of experience in sports management, Gord has played a pivotal

role in shaping strategy and growth at the community, regional, and national level. His leadership spans academia, government, media, and the corporate world — consistently building programs and properties that elevate the experience of sport across Canada.

LEADERS & FOUNDERS
**MONICA
KRETSCHMER**



**FOUNDER AND CEO,
UNIVERSAL WOMENS NETWORK™**

Monica Kretschmer is a serial entrepreneur and visionary Founder and CEO of the *Universal Womens Network™*, *Women of Inspiration™* Awards, and *SupportHER™*—a global initiative engaging male allies to champion women. For over a decade, she has amplified the achievements of women across North America through the

Women of Inspiration™ Podcast and *UWomen Magazine™*. A recognized trailblazer for gender equity, Monica partners with Fortune companies globally, using storytelling and collaboration to inspire authentic leadership and drive meaningful change.

JOIN THE REVOLUTION

‘THIS IS NOW A 280-MILLION-STRONG COMMUNITY’.

Be part of a movement driving real change in women’s and girls’ sports. Sponsoring the **She’s** Gala places your organization at the centre of a national conversation on equity, leadership, and innovation.

Each sponsor table includes a VIP athlete guest, offering attendees a unique opportunity to connect with inspiring leaders in Women’s sports.

She’s Sports offers the ultimate destination for female athletes and fans of women’s sports. In the absence of a platform, female athletes are engaging fans directly through **She’s**.



GalaBid

CLICK OR SCAN THE CODE

We're thrilled to invite you to participate in the official **She's** Gala Auction. This is your chance to bid on exclusive items while supporting a movement greater than the night itself.

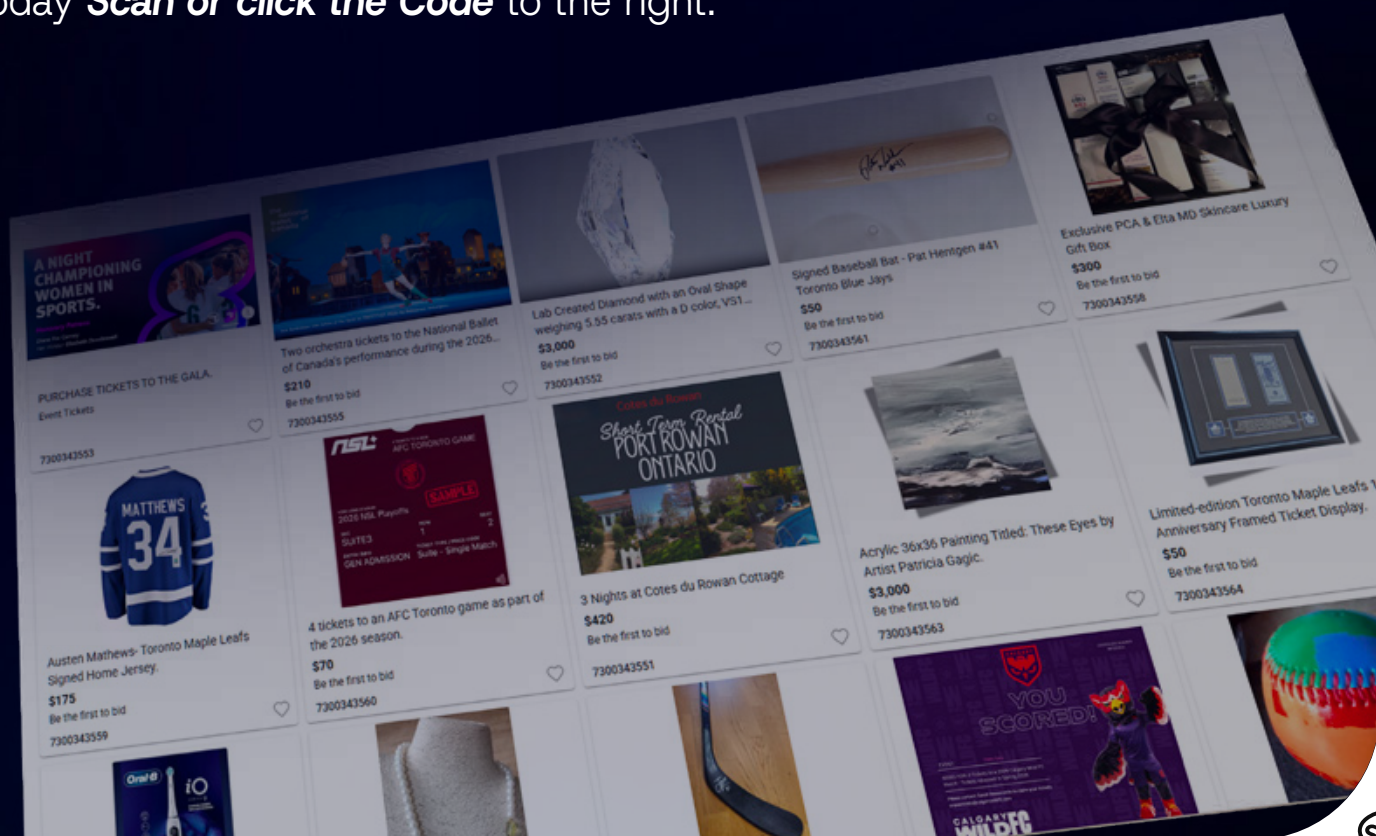
Every bid helps elevate women in sport and leadership — ensuring more visibility, more opportunity, and more impact for the future.

To explore all items and place your bids today **Scan or click the Code** to the right.

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SCAN ME



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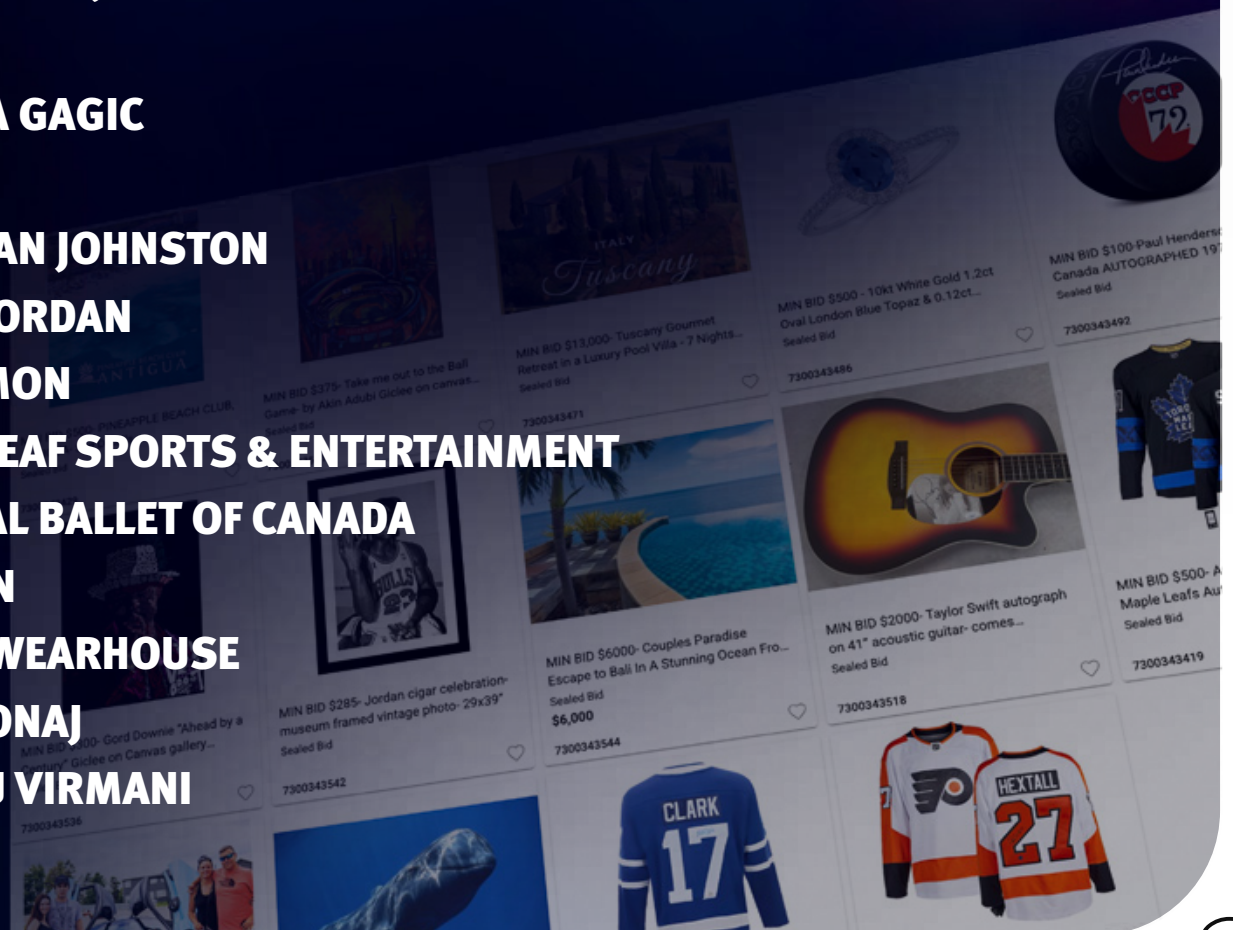
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DR. ANJU VIRMANI

Every bid helps elevate women in sport and leadership — ensuring more visibility, more opportunity, and more impact for the future.



OUR EMCEE

She/Is LAUREN HOWE



A Canadian host, actor, and storyteller whose career spans entertainment, sports, and STEM. She began her on-camera work with the Toronto Maple Leafs while completing her Industrial Engineering degree at the University of Toronto, later appearing on Sportsnet, TSN, Breakfast Television, and CityTV. She has covered major cultural and sporting events including the Grammys red carpet, TIFF, The King's Plate, the Invictus Games, and the Pan and Parapan-American Games.

A scholarship dare led to her being crowned Miss Canada and placing in the Top 10 at Miss

Universe, an experience that sparked her mission to tell more nuanced, female-focused stories. She's now developing a docuseries exploring the global female experience through curiosity and cultural context.

Her work also includes acting (Reacher, Blackberry, Neon Lights), photography, and Howe To, a digital series on people and ideas shaping the world. She's known for her curiosity, intelligence, and playful wit — and she'll happily talk golf or sharks with anyone who asks.



Co-Chairs

Pauline Couture (left)

Author & Creative Strategist
Media, Arts & Social Impact
Leader in Complex Projects,
Advocacy & Creative Innovation

Baljit Sidhu (Right)

Healthcare Innovator & Executive
For Profit and Not For Profit Sectors
Nurithrive Health Services
Farm Fairy Foundation

Gala Committee Members

Pamela Armstrong
Mark Boudreau
Charmaine Denton
Gay Hamilton
Stephanie MacKendrick
Brittany Mathison
Dr. Anju Virmani

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QUEENBHIVE PR & MARKETING
Rebecca McAdam Willetts (CEO)
Paul Greenhalgh (Creative Director)

Paul Brickel (TECHNOLOGY LEADER)
Appleby Students Strings Quartet

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WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS WHO
MADE THIS EVENING POSSIBLE.**



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Burlington
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + TOURISM



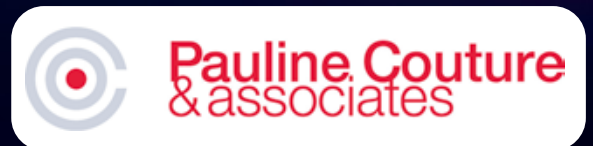
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TRAVEL IN STYLE

GOINNOVATION
TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF AI AND TECHNOLOGY



HELP US BUILD THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S SPORT IN CANADA

Be part of the momentum.



SPORTS NETWORK

