

# New book detailing history of RSA available only at Museum store

By James Vannurden, Director & Curator, National Museum of Roller Skating

The museum announces the addition of a new book, available only in its store. Our Story: Roller Skating Association International celebrates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the RSA. It tells the story from conception to its present success and explores the different decisions involved with the growth of the organization.

Many individuals helped with the development of this story. Tina Robertson, current RSA president, Annelle Anderson, museum board president, and George Pickard, museum co-founder, all assisted in the execution of the book. The group searched through endless museum photos, uncovered each existing RSA logo, and wrote the text for the story. The museum assisted in their efforts with use of its archival collection.

The book begins with a flash back to past presidents. In its seventy-five years of existence, the RSA (previously the RSROA) elected thirty-six different presidents; Victor Brown and Gordon Van Roekel each served two, non-consecutive terms. The book features a

photograph of each president with his/her term years underneath.

With each past president represented, the book delves into the history of roller skating itself and the story of the Roller Skating Association. The history begins with James Plimpton and his sport changing "rocking action skate" of 1863. Because of this innovation, roller skating erupted into a national sport and obsession, slowly expanded into the rest of the world.

This brought up the formation of small organizations to create jurisdictions. The International Skating Union of American formed in 1907. The Western Skating Association, a branch of the ISU, then dominated the sport during the 1920s. Other skating associations included: the National Skating Association of America, the National League of Roller Skaters of the United States, and the United States Roller Skating Association. Each left its mark on the sport and became a segue into the newest association: the Roller Skating Ring Operators Association.

In 1937, seventeen rink operators came together to promote the sport of roller skating and to carve a clear path for its future. There existed a need for such an organization. As one of the

founders and first secretary/treasurer Fred Martin wrote: "In 1937 roller skating in America was considered by

owners to join the cause. The RSROA set operational standards to create a better atmosphere. By 1941 the RSROA established itself as a premiere sports organization.

Following the story of the RSA, the book delves into past award winners of the association. The existing list of award winners includes the following: the Vernon Fowlkes Memorial Award, the RSROA/RSA Roller Skating Hall of Fame, RSA Life Members, RSM Lifetime Achievement Award, SRSTA Life Members, and SCA Life Members.

For those interested in this new book, please contact the museum at (402) 483-7551 or [www.rollerskatingmuseum.com](http://www.rollerskatingmuseum.com). It is also available through internet orders. The cost is \$7. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the National Museum of Roller Skating. Thanks in advance for your support.

*Our Story*  
ROLLER SKATING ASSOCIATION  
INTERNATIONAL



Founded and Incorporated  
April 3, 1937  
Detroit, Michigan

the majority of the population as a disreputable sport, and rinks were not well attended and few parents would allow their children to visit such places of amusement."

The founders then expanded the association by soliciting reputable rink

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Museum hours: Mon.-Fri., 9-5  
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A good way to do a quick check of your rental fleet is to ask yourself, "Would I want my children to wear them?"

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Are they good enough and safe enough for your children?



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