



IAN FROESE • THE CARILLON

From the left, Travis Hamonic, Rich Gosselin and Dave Hochman proudly pose in front of a new sign in St Malo that honours these three along with Dan Lambert, currently an assistant coach with the WHL's Kelowna Rockets and one of the highest scoring defencemen in WHL history.

# St Malo fetes native sons

by Ian Froese

HE likely dreamt of Stanley Cups and scoring titles as a young boy, but St. Malo's Travis Hamonic of the NHL's New York Islanders also had an aspiration tailored to the small, rural community he grew up in.

"It's funny being a rural kid in Manitoba. You always go to these towns and see the 'home of' sign, and you think in the back of your head that would be pretty cool to see (happen to you)," said the 20-year-old.

The rookie defenceman was immortalized on a new 9.6 by 3.6 metre sign erected last week in St. Malo to boast their accomplished sons. Hamonic's name is etched alongside Steinbach Pistons coach and Winnipeg Jets

alumnus Richmond Gosselin, Quebec Nordiques defenseman Dan Lambert and sled dog racer Dave Hochman.

Hamonic said seeing his name on the sign caused him to reflect not only on wearing a Warriors jersey as a kid, but the support network that helped him get to where he is today.

"I'm definitely honoured to be up there, but I just think of my family more than anything and my late father who passed away 10 years ago. He meant a lot to this community as with my mom, my brother and two sisters. This place will always be considered our home."

The second round draft pick in the 2008 NHL Draft moved to Winnipeg at the age of 14. He turned professional this past season, cracking the Islanders roster

in November and never looked back. He tallied 26 points in 62 games, the second highest scoring defenceman on the team.

The athletes were honoured as well as numerous community members at a volunteer recognition awards night on Saturday. The first annual event in the St. Malo church basement was presented by the St. Malo & District Chamber of Commerce.

Gosselin, a former Jet who made his mark as a player and coach in Europe, is pleased to have assisted in laying the foundation for the hockey stars of today and tomorrow.

"We didn't have the arena when we started playing hockey. We won a few championships and after that the town just had a lot of good hockey players," said Gosselin, who joked about paint-

ing over the other three names on the sign.

"This is a great hockey bed and the people here have always been very supportive. I was lucky to be born in St. Malo."

Although St. Malo has brought up numerous hockey stars, they have also made an impact outside the rink. Renowned sled dog racer Dave Hochman was also humbled to hear of the recognition.

He said moving to St. Malo as a 22-year-old was the best decision he ever made.

"I've put in my own trail and luckily there's great landowners here (allowing me to do that,) said Hochman of his groomed 27.4-kilometre track. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be able to live here."

Lambert, who played 28

games for the Nordiques in the early '90s, also received the honour although he was unable to attend the evening function. Another St. Malo hockey great Art Coulombe spoke on his behalf.

Although his NHL career lasted only 28 games in the early '90s, he continued playing professionally until 2009, moving around the IHL, AHL and Europe.

On an evening St. Malo thanked its many volunteers, the athletes forever memorialized, didn't forget to applaud the support they received from their hometown, many of which were volunteers.

"A lot of coaches here, a lot of fans, lot of friends and family I am very thankful for," said Hamonic. "That's something that's pretty important to me."