

## **Mickey Haase Medal (2017)**

Among the various trophies and medals of the Utica Curling Club is a new award, named for a legendary local curler; Mickey Haase (Marcella Haase, but no one at the club ever heard her called anything other than Mickey).

“Mickey loved all of her curling family and by awarding a competition medal, we honor and pay tribute to her true spirit - friendship, loyalty, and love.” This was the stated intent made by Mickey’s family friends: to have a medal built, in honor of Mickey, and have it awarded in yearly league competition at The Utica Curling Club.

To memorialize one of The Utica Curling Club’s favorite curlers, a unique and luxurious medal has been created. And this medal will be competed for annually. The story of the medal is a good tale.

Mickey identified heavily with her Irish heritage, and it was requested that a claddaugh be incorporated into the design. The letter of intent to commission the medal cited Mickey’s “true spirit” as "friendship, loyalty, and love” which is what the claddaugh symbolizes through two hands, holding a crowned heart. The hands represent "friendship", while the heart obviously suggests “love”, and the crown references “loyalty”.

For the medal, the hands of the claddaugh were replaced with brooms, a central element to curling. Traditionally, straw and corn brooms are used as a design element within curling jewelry. This swap permitted the creation of a “curling claddaugh, and the crowned heart was kept so that the allusion to an Irish Claddaugh was easily apparent.

The budget for the project was such that it was to be built entirely from silver. In an effort raise the material value of the medal, the project was opened to donations of old gold to offset costs and to provide material to use for highlights. The curling membership responded generously, hoping not only to create a memorial medal, but a valuable one. The resulting pile of gold was enough to create the central elements entirely in gold. Yellow gold, white gold, and rose gold.

The unique design of the medal, done with Mickey in mind, is enhanced further by the notion that the medal itself is made from the gold of curlers who played alongside Mickey on the ice. The tribute now seems a bit magical, an alloying of metal and nostalgia to create an heirloom which will be both treasured and competed for by Mickey’s friends and family.

In the decades that follow, a tail of name plates will extend from the medal. Each plate will be inscribed with the team that won the medal that year.