



## ALUMNI PROFILE

### WHO IS CLARA HUGHES?

Clara Hughes is one of those rare athletes who have competed for their country in more than one sport. Between 1991 and 2012, she wore the red Maple Leaf as both a speed skater and a road cyclist. She has been extremely successful in both sports. Clara is one of only six athletes to win a medal at both the Winter and Summer Olympics and is the only athlete to win multiple medals at both.

Off the track, Clara has also been an advocate for mental health. She has been a national spokesperson for the Bell Canada 'Let's Talk Mental Health' initiative and has helped to break down the stigma that can be attached to mental health issues.

Clara Hughes first started speed skating at the age of 16. A year later she began cycling. Her first international success came in cycling at the 1991 Pan American Games where she won bronze in the Women's Team Time Trial and silver in the Women's Individual Pursuit events. She then competed on home soil at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria, B.C., where she helped Canada win a silver medal in the Women's Team Time Trial event.

At the Atlanta 1996 Summer Olympics, she won bronze in both the Women's Individual Time Trial and Individual Road Race. Switching back to speed skating, she then won a Bronze medal in the Women's 5,000m at the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Olympics. A few months later, Clara competed in cycling at her second Commonwealth Games in Manchester. There, she won gold in the Women's Time Trial and Bronze in the Women's Points Race.

Hughes would go on to win medals at both the 2006 and 2010 Winter Olympics. Over the course of her career, she also won medals at three Pan Am Games, several UCI World Road Cycling Championships, and ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships.

When not competing, Clara Hughes has become an advocate for mental health. She herself has struggled with depression and shared those struggles in her 2015 memoir, *Open Heart, Open Mind*. In 2013, Clara started an annual bike ride across Canada to raise awareness about mental health issues.

Clara Hughes has also been involved with Right To Play, an international organization that uses sports to encourage youth in some of the most disadvantaged places in the world to develop through play and have a safe and joyful childhood. After winning her gold medal at the 2006 Winter Olympics, Clara made a generous donation to Right to Play.

In recognition of her success as an athlete and her efforts away from the field of play, Clara Hughes has received a number of honours and awards, including the following:

- Named Speed Skating Canada 2004 Female Athlete of the Year (long track)
- Named to the Order of Manitoba in 2006
- Received 2006 International Olympic Committee Sport and Community Trophy
- Named to the 2006 List of Most Influential Women in Sport and Physical Activity by Canadian Women & Sport (she would be named to this list three times)
- Named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2007
- Received a star on the Canadian Walk of Fame in 2010
- Inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 2010

- Honoured with the Meritorious Service Cross (Civil Division) in 2014

