

America's Best

Skating Legend To Aid People With Brain Injury

(NAPSA)—After gliding through decades of good fortune, one versatile star discovered himself on very thin ice.

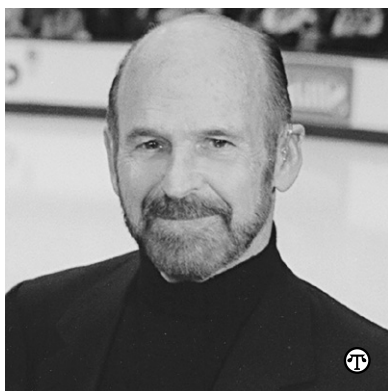
Dick Button dominated the world of figure skating for seven years. He won two Olympic gold medals, five world championships and seven U.S. titles. He was the first American to capture figure skating gold at the Olympics and the only skater ever to make a grand slam sweep of all major titles. He was elected to the World Figure Skating Hall of Fame in 1976.

As a sports commentator, he became the first winner of an Emmy award for Outstanding Sports Personality.

He wrote several books on skating and graduated from Harvard College and Harvard Law School. From there he went on to become a major producer of sports entertainment programs.

There's no doubt that Button adores his sport. Skating was good to him up until January 31, 2000, when he sustained a serious brain injury after taking a spill on the ice. Although Button was hospitalized, he was able to bounce back. "I'm fine, I'm here and I'm wreaking havoc as usual," says Button, who reclaimed his familiar spot behind the microphone at the U.S. Nationals and World Figure Skating Championships; and ran in the opening parade at the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics Games.

Throughout his hospitalization and to this day, Button has no recollection of the fall or what happened thereafter. In order to restore his health, Button



Skating legend Dick Button.

required extensive inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation.

After his hospitalization, Dick Button took on a new role, that of national spokesman for the Brain Injury Association of America. The 72-year-old is especially interested in communicating to a demographic that, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has the highest rate of traumatic brain injury (TBI) fatality: People aged 75 and older. Falls, he points out, are the leading cause of TBI among the elderly. Of all fall-related TBI deaths, more than 67 percent involve the aged.

One step that may help is daily physical activity to increase strength and sense of balance. Another important preventative measure is to remove anything that may cause tripping on stairs and walkways. Frequently used items should be in easy-to-reach places. Have handrails and lights in all stairwells and bathrooms.

To learn more, see www.biausa.org.