

Biggest tuna award revived; named after Red Head tuna fisher

By Kyle Cotton
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The late Kenny Drake was a well respected,highly dedicated fisherman out of Red Head Harbour in Morell.

A fighter for the PEI tuna industry, Drake traveled the world representing not just the Island, but all of Canada as the Canadian Commissioner to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

Kenny, who passed away in February 2025, won several awards over his career on the waters, including the Premier's Tuna Cup,given to the tuna fisher who reeled in the biggest catch for the year, which was discontinued in 2017.

That is until his son, Tommy Drake, received an email from the PEI Fisherman's Association (PEIFA) shortly after Kenny had passed away early last year proposing they bring the award back and rename the award the Kenny Drake Biggest Tuna award.

"It was quite an emotional time for me in particular since I fished with Dad. We loved the idea,"Drake said."The tuna advisory board is where the whole idea came from. They put it to the PEIFA board directors and they approved it just before they contacted us."

Tommy said his father had been fighting for the tuna industry since the '70s and there was a hole left in the industry when

he passed.

There were fishers from Portugal to Mexico reaching out, extending their condolences.

"He was never really a man for wanting accolades. He went about his business of volunteering without a thank you but he would've been proud to have all of his hard work represented," he said.

When they were on the water together, they often discussed how things have changed over time,Tommy said.

"Not a lot of guys have experienced what the older guys experienced. There were just a few fish a year and you had to travel a lot. It wasn't easy to fish, that's for sure,"Tommy said,noting the comfort of the vessels has changed, upgrading from a wooden bed and a small stove.

"When it comes down to rod and reel, it hasn't changed much. Guys were really good at chumming and those kinds of things, little knacks on the line, where now chumming isn't as big as it was.Trolling with squids is more popular now too."

A lot of the time, Kenny spent his time fishing tuna in Canso, NS before setting up in Red Head Harbour.

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Tommy Drake (back), his father Kenny Drake (middle) and his son, Sawyer coming in on landing day in Kenny's last season on the water.
Submitted photo

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