

Toller Cranston, the Laid-Back, Loose-Hanging, Jump-Suited, Thawed-Out, Canadian Contradiction

"I skate the way I think Isadora Duncan danced," Toller Cranston says. "I'm trying to explore every facet of my personality. I'm criticized as flamboyant, arrogant and melodramatic. I'm black and white. I'm yes and no. I try to live my life touching extremes."

Toller, now twenty-eight, was born in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, a small mining community and has spent much of his life defying Canadian traditions.

One major one was that men figure skaters were frozen from the waist up. Toller began figure skating at seven. At seventeen his flexible style dismayed the judges at the Canadian Championships, and though he skated with bewildering finesse, he finished fourth. He bounced back when Ellen Burka, a leading coach, insisted he was right and they were wrong. In time, under her tutelage, he won the Canadian free skating championship six times and the world championship, three. His style, featuring swooping movement of the arms, head and torso, revolutionized male figure skating. It was also often described as "effeminate," and Toller was a lonely, defensive young man.

Dr. Fred A. Urquhart, of the University of Toronto, is the monarch of all he surveys. For forty years, he and his wife, Norah, have kept a long-distance eye on eastern monarch butterflies. After many experiments, they developed a pressure-applied adhesive label that could be stuck to a monarch's wing without diminishing its ability to fly. Over the decades, he built up corps of volunteer watchers, throughout North

"I never pretended to be the boy next door, or a super jock like Joe Namath. Namath has one type of masculinity; I have another. A man is a man, and being a man depends on how you feel about yourself."

This spring *Toller Cranston's The Ice Show* was on Broadway for eight weeks, getting critical raves, but playing to less than full houses. First, fifteen yellow-clad skaters glided on; and then Toller, wearing a black-beaded jump suit, cut nearly to his navel, came down, slowly, on a large, shining star. "I just had to say, 'Well here I am, New York.'"

At the moment Toller is feeling great. He is also a painter, and his works, in a style called mystic symbolism, sell for as much as six thousand dollars.

"I could stop skating tomorrow and never look back. My painting career is very valid and successful and I could support myself doing that. I would also like to design ballet costumes. The important thing is to end your career with a certain kind of dignity and I think I did that. At least I never joined the Ice Capades."

America, who helped discover the monarch's migration patterns. The glorious culmination of it all came when a volunteer in central Mexico found a mountainside covered with millions of wintering monarchs, one of which at least was properly labelled. Dr. Urquhart promptly went down to see for himself and, in his own words, "gazed in amazement. A glorious, incredible sight."

