



81-Year-Old CNE Superfan Receives the Fair's First-Ever “Golden Ticket”

Lifetime admission ticket bestowed to Barbara Batten in celebration of an unbroken attendance streak of 81 years



Toronto, ON (August 28, 2026) - Barbara Jean Batten, who was raised in Toronto and Scarborough (and now resides in Bracebridge, ON), may very likely be one of the CNE's most dedicated patron, having never missed a single year of attending The EX since she was born.

Her family's connection and memories at the CNE span as far back as 1930s when her father competed in the music competitions, winning various harmonica medals that have become family heirlooms. Her parents took her to the CNE as an infant, and she has never missed a year since 1945. As the oldest of four siblings, Barbara's love for the CNE has carried through multiple generations and created cherished memories, including attending with her critically ill sister whose final wish was to experience the CNE with her family, before her untimely passing.



Barbara (left) with sister Donna as teenagers at the CNE

Upon discovering Barbara's story, CNE organizers were inspired to recognize her lifelong patronage and bestow its first-ever **CNE Golden Ticket**. A special ceremony took place inside the Princes' Gates on Friday, August 28, 2026, attended by her family members, CNE staff, and CNE CEO Mark Holland who presented Barbara Batten with the Golden Ticket that will not only be an official keepsake, but will grant her CNE admission for as many years as she would like to attend.

“We’ve received so many moving stories from dedicated CNE fans over the years; and are always finding ways to thank and recognize some of the exceptional people who are the heartbeat of our Fair, and why we do what we do,” says CNE CEO Mark Holland. “Last year, we hosted a Marriage on the Midway for a CNE-loving couple; and this year, we’re thrilled to introduce our first-ever Golden Ticket that will serve as a CNE tradition to recognize a patron who has surpassed a gold anniversary of 50+ years of attending the Fair.”

IN PHOTOS:



Elaine Darwin (left) submitted her sister Barbara’s story to the CNE.
Pictured above with CNE CEO Mark Holland (right).



Family and friends of Barbara Batten travelled from across Ontario to celebrate her CNE Golden Ticket.



81-year-old Barbara Jean Batten will enjoy unlimited admission to The EX,
as the first-ever recipient of the CNE Golden Ticket.

For more photos from CNE Golden Ticket Presentation, August 28, 2026: (Photo Credit: CNE/Harrison Haines)
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1nU11N1hb-evjotR8KZm7u87HUKDIAVlt>