

Community puts on tribute for retiring Mayor Morrison

By Bill Rea

There were few empty seats at the Royal Ambassador Friday, but plenty of smiles as the Caledon community thanked Mayor Marolyn Morrison for her years of service.

After 11 years in office, Morrison decided not to seek re-election last month, and will be officially stepping down early next week.

There were many officials and dignitaries on hand with words of tribute for the departing mayor.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones commented that from watching Morrison in action, she got to see what a strong advocate she's been.

"In 20-plus years, she never stopped," Jones said, as she wished "blue skies ahead," for her and her husband John.

Peel Region Chair Emil Kolb, who is also retiring next week, observed that Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion is leaving as well.

"It's a real end of an era," Kolb observed.

He also commented on how great it had been to see so many women taking a strong role in local government over the years, pointing out it was not easy for women to advance in politics 26 years ago.

"Marolyn, you are an excellent role model for up and coming leaders," he said.

He also praised Morrison for her support of the development plans for Caledon. "You stayed firm with that plan," he remarked, adding Caledon is better today for that leadership.

"I thank you for the direction that you gave Caledon and the Region of Peel," Kolb said.

"Some people go to Florida, some people go to Arizona. I go to Caledon," McCallion quipped.

She also had praise for Morrison. "She has just been a dynamic leader of Caledon," she declared.

"Marolyn has made a major contribution," she added. "Your mayor has preserved Caledon. She stood her ground and been strong."

"Marolyn has championed the development of professionalism of all the staff," commented Town CAO Doug Barnes, who added Morrison has worked on improving staff morale around the town; visiting the works yards, fire halls and recreation facilities.

"Marolyn did a very good job of trying to make the staff of the Town of Caledon the best they could be," he added.

Retired OPP Sergeant Bob Patterson commented on the Town's relationship with the local police.

"It's been a complicated one," he said. "It's been a great one."

He also said Morrison has shown unwavering leadership and creativity.

"Thank you for your unwavering support," he added. "You've been a heck of a police partner."

"You're truly a respected and admired person in Caledon Fire and Emergency Services," Fire Chief David Forfar told Morrison.

"You will be missed and never forgotten."

Councillor-Elect Jennifer Innis, who was Morrison's executive assistant for several years, said the two words that come to mind when she thinks of the mayor are energy and integrity.

Innis said she's asked a number of people what they think Morrison's greatest accomplishment has been, and a frequent response has had to do with the way Caledon has set its own course in its planning.

Morrison's oldest son Andrew spoke for the family, recalling growing up with "two supportive and sometimes doting parents."

He also recalled the advice they received from their parents. From their father, it was "try your best." From their mother, it was "treat others as you like to be treated, love what you do and stand up for what you believe."

"This is overwhelming," Morrison declared when it was her turn to speak, as she said she would have preferred to leave quietly, without any fanfare.

There were several people she thanked, including her husband.

"Having a wonderful husband who's always there for you, who takes the blows for you; there's nobody better."



Mayor Marolyn Morrison and her husband John were marched into Friday's tribute by the Caledon Fire and Emergency Services Honour Guard, led by Capt. Don Rea on the pipes.



Retired OPP Sergeant Bob Patterson presented Morrison with a stetson like what OPP used to wear.



Morrison's son Andrew spoke on behalf of the family.



Caledon's CAO? Doug Barnes commented that Morrison always worked to improve staff morale.