

Community was out to say 'goodbye' to former councillor

By Bill Rea

There were plenty of good wishes being expressed as friends and neighbours gathered at Caledon Village Place recently to say 'goodbye' to their former Regional councillor.

Richard Paterak and his wife Rose Dupont have moved to Ridgeway in Niagara Region, but many in the community still wanted the chance to take their leave.

'You couldn't leave Caledon without getting a sense that we are all behind you and appreciate all you did,' remarked Councillor Doug Beffort.

Paterak served 17 years on Town council; the first six as area representative for Ward 1 before being elected to Peel Regional council for his last three terms. In that time, he sat on a number of boards and committees, including the Board of Caledon Community Services (CCS).

Monty Laskin, CAO for CCS, praised him as an engaged member of the Board, 'when he was awake at meetings.'

Laskin also said Paterak had been something of a mentor to him, helping him gain an understanding of the community.

'Richard was always a strong advocate for CCS to do a little bit more outside of the box,' Laskin remarked.

Kelly Potter, another member of the Board, also had praise for Paterak.

'The great thing about Richard is you always know where he stands,' she said.

Paterak was also active with Bethell Hospice.

Elizabeth Birnie, daughter of the late founder Lorna Bethell, commented that had it not been for Paterak, there wouldn't be a residential hospice facility in Caledon.

'He found us the land,' she declared, adding he also made sure they had all their permits in order. 'He and Mom were like two peas in a pod.'

'You're the most amazing guy!' Birnie told Paterak.

Former mayor Carol Seglins praised Paterak for always supporting the interests of the community, and for being a good listener.

She also wished them well in their new home. 'We're waiting for directions on how to get there,' she said.

Beffort said he wasn't ready to say 'goodbye' because they plan to stay in touch.

Paterak recalled he grew up in a suburb of Boston, observing in New England, it was a rule that one took part in the community. He added once he set roots down in Caledon, he wanted to get more involved.

'It's been a joy,' he said. 'It's never been a chore.'

Paterak said he was acclaimed the first time he was elected to council. He recalled there would be disagreements at the council table, but there was also the knowledge that everyone there cared about the community.

'We want a civilized society,' he said.

'I'm confident as Caledon matures, that great things will happen here,' he added.



Former councillor Richard Paterak was joined by his wife Rose Dupont at the recent celebration. Photo by Bill Rea