

Lessons and Legacies

by ALLAN THOMPSON

Just after my first election as Mayor in 2014, I got a phone call I would never forget.

"Hello, Mayor Thompson," said the familiar voice.

It was none other than the Hon. William (Bill) Davis calling to offer his congratulations.

That call, his voice, brought me back to my Grade Four trip to Queen's Park.

A bunch of kids sitting on the stairs of the entrance to the legislature listening to Premier Davis share stories about his job as leader of the provincial government, he was so engaging and interesting. One of my classmates asked a question about whether he liked (or didn't) people from the other political parties and Bill ran down the hall and brought back Bob Nixon, a Liberal MPP and Stephen Lewis of the New Democrats.

I remember the three of them joking around and teasing each other, and yet it was clear they had a lot of respect for each other. That was a big leadership lesson for me: you don't always have to agree, but you should always respect.

Political leaders today should look at how Bill Davis often worked across party lines for the greater good. Now that's not saying he wasn't a good political debater, because you don't get to serve six terms of office unless you are. He just understood the importance of collaboration to achieve a goal and he put that to use in playing a pivotal role in the development of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Constitution.

He was a role model for me, for many, and his legacy of leadership will live on in the memories of all who had the privilege of meeting and knowing him.