

Morrison's service recognized in tribute by Headwaters Arts

By Bill Rea

Mayor Marolyn Morrison has been serving the community for many years, and there were several people who recently joined Headwaters Arts in acknowledging that.

Councillor Allan Thompson said Morrison has been a "fantastic steward of the issues in Caledon," pointing out she was instrumental in getting countryside mayors together, and has been good at collaborating with other municipalities.

"She has been a good caretaker," he added.

"We all appreciate the leadership that Marolyn has shown," Thompson remarked. "Marolyn has never shied away from an issue."

Peel Region Chair and CEO Emil Kolb offered his congratulations for all that Headwaters Arts has accomplished over the last couple of years.

He also reflected on the 11 years Morrison's been mayor.

"I think Mayor Morrison has always made a commitment to do what's best for the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel," he remarked. "I think she's done a wonderful, wonderful job."

"What impresses me the most is she's not afraid to stand up for what she believes in," he added.

Kolb also observed Morrison and her husband John plan to travel a lot after she leaves office.

"Enjoy every minute," he said. "You certainly earned it all."

Morrison recalled when she was elected to her first office (Trustee on the Peel Board of Education in 1988), Kolb, who had just been re-elected Mayor of Caledon, invited her to his office and told her that if there was anything he could do to help her in the job, she was to call him.

Morrison said she has sometimes wondered how she was able to get elected, first as a trustee, then Regional councillor in 1994 and mayor in 2003. She said a lot of people helped in those campaigns, and they have stayed with her.

She also recalled that not long after becoming mayor, she started feeling pressures from developers, that got more aggressive.

She commented that 95 per cent of developers are committed to excellence and doing their word well "There are just a few who aren't," she added.

Morrison said she started feeling threatened in 2007, noticing cars following her at night, something she said made her more angry than nervous.

She was also served with a lawsuit, which she said made her more nervous than being followed at night.

But she stressed she was not ready to give into developers. Morrison recalled writing about it in one of her newspaper columns, asking people if they wanted developers planning the town.

"My position was, of course, Caledon should plan Caledon," she said.

Morrison said her husband John was also accosted, and threatened to get his wife on side. and then he was assaulted outside their home.

"It was quite something," Morrison said. "There's so much more to being mayor than just chairing the council meetings."

The following day, she said the police sent a specialty team to the house. "I hope you both have your wills up to date," she recalled one of the officers saying.

It was around this time that a lump in her husband's neck was diagnosed as cancerous, and one of her sons was serving in Afghanistan. And there were allegations that led to her being investigated by the police.

"I was squeaky clea



Mayor Marolyn Morrison with Wayne Baguley, past-president of Headwaters Arts.

n, she said, describing the strategy that needs to be followed at such a time. "You cannot ignore it. You have to go after these people."

Morrison said she wasn't planning to run in 2010, but as those issues mounted, she told her husband her inclination was to dig in her heels and fight.

"That's the girl I married," was her husband's reply. "Go for it."

Earlier this year, Jeffrey Granger was sentenced to three years in prison for breach of trust by a public official, accepting a secret commission and fraud. Part of the charges involved an attempt to discredit Morrison which led to the police investigation.

Morrison maintained she had only done what the people of Caledon wanted her to do.

Morrison also reflected that Caledon does support the arts.

"It's been a little slow coming, but I believe council really does care," she said.

Morrison studied fine arts at university, and she recalled trying to get an art gallery established at Town Hall when she became mayor, in an effort to spruce up the walls.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase local art," she observed.

Wayne Baguley, past-president of Headwaters Arts, commented on how much Morrison has done to promote arts in the community.

"We're doing very, very well," he said, although he added there's still a way to go.

He also observed that bringing the various arts in the area together is a huge undertaking, and he said they need plenty of support to continue the effort.

"Please be generous with the arts," he said. "Support the arts."

"It's all about passion," he added. "It could be a hobby. It could be a profession."