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Clarke appointed county court judge

By KAY MANN

Cobourg lawyer James Clarke, QC, has been appointed a county court judge for Halton Region at Milton. The appointment was announced privately to Clarke Wednesday night by federal justice minister Mark MacGuigan, following the passage of an order in council.

For Clarke it ends a year of waiting since the lawyer of 23 years applied for the federal appointment.

"It is a delight and a relief," he said today.

Champagne corks popped at the King Street law office of Clarke, Stewart and Mitchell Thursday evening as fellow lawyers heard the news. The private party was arranged by Clarke's partners, Dave Stewart and Ron Mitchell, but the posting was under wraps until Friday.

"I will hate to leave Cobourg as I love the town and the people," Clarke told the Cobourg Star Friday afternoon. "We have lived here for 20 years and have made many deep friendships. I hope to be able to keep up these relationships."

Clarke will be one of four county court judges in the region which has a population of 5.5 million.

He was called to the Bar in 1960, after receiving his BA from McGill University in 1956 and graduating from the Canadian Officers training course at Camp Borden that same year. He graduated with a law degree from Osgoode Hall in 1960. In 1976 he was named a Queen's Counsel by the Ontario government.

Clarke, born in Peterborough, began his law career in that city but came to Cobourg to join Judge J.C. M. German, QC, a year later. In 1965, following

Judge German's death, Clarke formed a partnership with David Stewart, QC, in 1965, and Ron Mitchell joined the firm in 1970.

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James Clarke

Clarke * appointed

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Until his appointment as judge, Clarke served as Cobourg's lawyer. Over his career he acted as president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer of the Northumberland Law Association, pro-tem legal aid director, deputy legal aid director and chairman in 1978 and 1979 for Northumberland legal aid.

He has been special prosecutor for the Department of Justice since 1970 and part-time Crown Attorney. He was also a member of the National Council of the Canadian Bar Association since 1980.

All Clarke's legal functions ceased as of his acceptance of the judgeship Wednesday night.

Clarke's community involvement spans his legal career.

Vitaly concerned with improving the quality of life of the disabled, he served as treasurer of Access, a Port Hope non-profit agency which operates group homes for the disabled, and is an honorary member of the Cobourg-Port Hope Association for the Mentally Retarded.

Several years ago he took a sabbatical with his family to spend a year in France working with Jean Vanier and the mentally handicapped and wrote the book, L'Arche Journal, an account of his experiences.

From 1963 to 1965 he served as a Cobourg town councillor. He is a past president of the Cobourg-Port Hope and district Boy Scout Association and a former member of the special education advisory planning committee of the Northumberland-Newcastle Board of Education. He is also a past president of the Northumberland-Durham Federal Liberal Association from 1968 to 1969.

Clarke is a member of the Knights of Columbus and was a lay director of the Cursillo movement, Diocese of Peterborough.

He is married to Mary Elizabeth and the couple has seven children, including a foster son and an adopted Vietnamese daughter.

Clarke said he was sad to leave his law partners, who have been more than colleagues, but good friends over the years.

At 50 he said he looked forward to starting his new career, which he begins in the New Year.

"I want to be a good judge," said Clarke.

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