

## *Di Diamantides involved with YMCA for many years*

By Tom Gavey

The Intelligencer

It's not the job Di Diamantides misses since he retired as executive director of the Belleville Family YMCA.

"I don't miss the work, but I miss the people. I had a chance to work with some excellent personnel," he says.

Diamantides put in two stints as the facility's executive director, from 1954 to 1965 and again in the 1970s. In all, he spent 24 years heading Belleville's operation before he retired in 1981.

Today, he and wife Eleni continue to call 338 Dufferin Ave. home and have fond memories of their long association

with the YMCA.

The Diamantides' first came to Belleville from Edmonton as physical director in 1952. Two years later he ascended to the executive director's position.

In between his stints with the YMCA in Canada, Diamantides spent three years helping the organization rebuild in his native Greece.

One of his fondest memories of his lifelong affiliation with the YMCA was the drive in the early 1960s to move from Campbell Street to a new facility. Diamantides was instrumental in seeing Belleville build a new home for the organization on Victoria Avenue.

"It was quite a thing. We had ourselves one of the best YMCAs between Montreal and Toronto. We had amazing support from the community," he remembers.

Diamantides joined the YMCA during his youth in Greece and says deciding to follow in the footsteps of a physical director there led him to a life of service with the charitable organization.

"I borrowed money from my uncle to come to the United States and eventually got a Bachelor of Science degree and my Masters in education," he says.

In 1940 Diamantides was back in Greece, but the government of the day outlawed youth groups like the YMCA and Girl Guides. That led him to Cy-

press and work starting a YMCA program there.

Diamantides has also been a member of the Rotary Club since 1956 and was involved in other organizations and charities in the past.

"I'm not as active as I was in the past, but I keep in touch with George Patsios and the local YMCA and the national and Greek programs," he says. Failing eyesight and a lung ailment have forced Diamantides to take things a little more slowly in recent years.

Thanks to a fellow YMCA member who visited Diamantides several years ago he's now a ham radio operator. The hobby allows him to come into contact with not just other Canadians, but people from around the world.

"I'm proud we've been able to build a strong YMCA and that has been continued by successive directors," says Diamantides.