

George Patsios

# Saviour

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George Patsios remembered as dedicated member of community

## of Belleville YMCA dies in

## Greece

By Chris Malette  
THE INTELLIGENCER

The man credited with saving the Belleville YMCA from certain closure has died.

George Patsios, who was born in Patras, Greece, and emigrated to Canada in the 1960s, died in his native Greece Monday with wife, Maria, and his family at his side.

He had been in failing health for the past two years and was unable to travel back to Canada to access treatment here in the last year of his life.

Mr. Patsios had served for a number of years in the 1980s and 1990s as executive director of the Belleville Y — then known as the

Belleville Family YMCA — and has been hailed as the architect of a plan that ensured the future of the community agency and saved the organization from bankruptcy.

"He would be there until midnight many nights doing whatever it took to keep that place afloat," recalled Mr. Patsios' friend and former YMCA volunteer and board president Hugh Campbell.

"Thanks to George's efforts and hard work there are a lot of people who can now enjoy what the Y has to offer in this community for years to come. He has certainly left a legacy in this community."

Mr. Patsios had been a long-time director of the YMCA in Hamilton, prior to accepting his appointment to the YMCA here, and quickly

embraced many aspects of his new community.



GEORGE PATSIOS

He was active in the Greek Orthodox Church family in Belleville, serving as the president of the Greek community for a number of years.

He was also an active member of the Rotary Club of Belleville and was president of the Belleville

Club.

It was in Mr. Patsios' term as

president of the Belleville Club that the decades old former gentleman's club enjoyed a renaissance of membership and activity.

Jim Downer, a friend of Mr. Patsios and former bank manager who dealt extensively with the YMCA, said Mr. Patsios' failing health, in recent years, were likely emotionally difficult for the former athlete and highly active individual.

He used a sports analogy to recall Mr. Patsios' enthusiastic involvement in community fundraisers and charitable activities.

"George was the kind of guy who wouldn't have been happy to be on the bench," said Downer. "He would have wanted to be on the field all the time."

Another friend, former mayor George Zegouras, said he was chatting to fellow Rotarians about Mr. Patsios Monday, only to return to work shortly after lunch and hear news of Mr. Patsios' death from Greece from Maria Patsios.

"He was a great friend and outstanding citizen in this community," said Zegouras.

"Although he has been gone from here for a few years, he will be greatly missed by all who knew him in Belleville and the many people whose lives he touched in Hamilton."

Mr. Patsios is survived by three children, Anna-Maria, Aggeliki and Demetrios, and his wife, Maria.

Funeral is Wednesday in Patras, Greece.