

Selection of 'Mr. Sunshine' as top citizen is 'well-deserved'

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The release also said Kilby is a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 197 and has participated in many Legion activities.

"It was also acknowledged by the nominees that Ivan has helped many people behind the scenes over the years," said the committee.

"He's fantastic," said Acton branch of the Canadian Cancer Society former transportation convenor Margaret MacKinnon. "He has the needs of the cancer patients at heart."

She said many times Kilby would cancel his plans if she called him to ask if he was available to drive a cancer patient.

Kilby quit driving for the Cancer Society late last year after the organization switched to a pilot project driver dispatch system. The Acton transportation convenor was eliminated and replaced with a central dispatch office in Hamilton.

Kilby felt "it was going to be fair for the clients."

"I wouldn't go along with that because my first thought is with the clients," he said.

So he decided to switch to Cancer Assistance Services Halton Hills (CASHh), an organization he describes as "above reproach."

"It's unbelievable what they are doing for their clients," said Kilby, who urges people to donate to CASHh.

He's pleased he made the switch to CASHh, and so is CASHh.

"We're glad to have him," said CASHh executive director Sheila Smith, who was thrilled Kilby was named Citizen of the Year. "He's just Mr. Sunshine. I call him our Sunshine Boy. He's very positive and very willing, he's just on the go all the time."

"He drives every day. Everybody just

loves him. He's wonderful," said Smith, adding the honour of being named Acton's top Citizen is "well deserved."

Kilby got his unofficial start driving cancer patients 22 years ago, shortly after he retired from management at Boeing, when a friend asked him to drive his young son to Sunnybrook for cancer treatment. He realized then being a volunteer driver might be something he would like to do.

Losing his wife Jean to cancer in 1991, and seeing many other people inflicted with the disease, was another factor that impacted his decision to become a volunteer driver.

He said those who haven't done it, "don't know what they're missing."

"You see the joy in people because they don't have to drive themselves. They can just sit back and relax. It makes you feel good

to know you're helping someone."

He said often times the patients open up to him, telling him things they wouldn't tell their families because they don't want to upset them.

"I say, 'just go ahead', it's between my client, myself and the steering wheel," he said.

He becomes very close with many of them.

"They're just like brothers and sisters. It really bothers you when you lose one of them," he said.

He drives patients to Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener and Mississauga for cancer treatment. Kilby is also a driver for the Canadian Red Cross.

He has two children—Beverley and Robert who is married to daughter-in-law Marjorie—and a five-year-old grandson, Kevin.

Although it's still being planned, Acton Rotary Club will be hosting a function to honour Kilby in the coming months.

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