Council pays respect to Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary

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Many councillors wore green and shamrocks were placed around the Council table Monday evening in honour of the Irish heritage of their colleague, Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary, who died May 13.

Council members and Town staff shared humorous anecdotes and fond memories of O'Leary, who had served as Ward 1 councillor since 2003. O'Leary's daughters Colleen and Christine were in the gallery.

Mayor Rick Bonnette remembered meeting O'Leary for the first time in a bar, back in 1982, when Bonnette was first running for council.

"I felt like somebody dating his daughter," said Bonnette. "He questioned me and argued with me."

Throughout the years Bonnette said he would see O'Leary manning the gates at the Acton Fair and volunteering with his wife Mary at Acton Arena for the Acton Figure Skating Club.

He added he was also an active participant with the Knights of Columbus and Acton BIA.

O'Leary had a great sense of humour, said Bonnette, quoting some of his favorite expressions such as, "so and so is just an empty suit."

"Mike always watched the dollars at budget time. He cared about keeping the taxes low," said Bonnette.

Acton councillor Jon Hurst said he and O'Leary "complemented each other" and that they had become good friends.

He said O'Leary loved being a councillor and would pore over the pages of the Town budget "with a fine tooth comb and probably a set of tweezers to boot."

"I will miss that quick dry wit and that mischievous smile," said Hurst.