

Local man thanks his new heroes: paramedics who saved his life

By Eamonn Maher
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Since suffering a heart attack three years ago just one hole into a round of golf at The Club at North Halton, Richard Winter has made it a point to show his gratitude to every paramedic he sees for the work they do after his episode had a happy ending.

The 62-year-old has been a member of the local club for close to 30 years and continues to thank his lucky stars for the chain of events that resulted in a ride to Mississauga's Credit Valley Hospital that day, but the good news is that he was back playing on his home course six weeks later.

Still, the longtime Oakville resident, who moved to Georgetown two years ago, felt bothered that he hadn't been able to express his appreciation to the two Halton EMS paramedics who came to his rescue.

"At sporting events or wherever, I think I've thanked every paramedic out there, except the guys who helped me, and there had to be a way of chasing them down," he said.

"I wouldn't be here now if they didn't do their jobs and I just wanted to thank them personally."

Winter recalls feeling a lump in his throat



Richard Winter, a longtime member at The Club at North Halton, finally had the opportunity to express his appreciation to Halton EMS paramedics Ian Manson (left) and Jurica Ivanusic earlier this month after suffering a heart attack at his home golf course more than three years ago.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

while hitting a few practice balls prior to his round with local dentists Walter Zelek and Larry Budolowski on a sweltering Friday afternoon of the Civic Holiday weekend. He retired to the clubhouse for a cold drink and felt fine.

Heading out to the par-5 first hole, Win-

ter reached the green in three shots, but the sensation in his throat returned, so he decided to turn back to the clubhouse, when by chance, he ran into good friend Phil Noble, who was playing with another group.

Noble remarked that Winter's skin looked pasty and felt something was seriously wrong. After bringing Winter to the locker room area, Club at North Halton staff called 911 to initiate the vital Chain of Survival.

Halton EMS paramedics Jurica Ivanusic and Ian Manson had just cleared a visit to Georgetown Hospital when the call came in for a man in distress at The Club at North Halton.

"I knew exactly where we were going because I have a history with this golf course," said Manson.

"We didn't have to look it up or pause. My family were members here for many years before they retired and moved and I've played this course a few times, so that may have saved us a few minutes."

Winter was loaded into the ambulance en route to Trillium Hospital in Mississauga, with his friends riding along to keep him comfortable. Manson noted that Winter's condition was stable during the trip, but the victim recalls little of the ordeal.

"I remember them telling me I was having a heart attack and I asked, 'Are you sure because it didn't feel anything like your traditional symptoms,'" said Winter, a retired project manager for the City of Toronto.

"They wheeled me into hospital and asked me to sign a document and my comment was, 'Should I read it first?' And they told me to just sign the thing"

An angioplasty was performed and a stent inserted at hospital during a 20- to 25-minute procedure and Winter was sent home shortly afterward. He said he lost 30 pounds in the months following the incident and is now living a much healthier lifestyle.

But not knowing the identity of the paramedics was eating away at Winter. Earlier this year, he contacted Halton Region Paramedic Services Deputy Chief of Logistics Christine Barber and she dug up the file of the incident, setting up the reunion.

Manson's family has a winter home in Florida near where Winter retreats as well and the two hope to play a round together in the coming months.

"My partner was outstanding that day and everything perfectly aligned as far as patient care and the outcome went," added Ivanusic.



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