

Krantz... the People's Mayor

BY TOWN OF MILTON AND KRANTZ FAMILY ARCHIVES



Introducing Brian Mulroney, 1984

town. He's kept that spirit alive through the gift of his presence and his vision." A major part of that impact has come from his role as the "the people's mayor" and his commitment to accessibility. "Right from day one, I've had an open door policy," he explains. "The mayor should be accessible to the public. I don't want some damned ivory tower or to be stuck in some corner office. I want to be right out front." Darlene Davidson, who served as his Executive Assistant from the moment he took office as Mayor twenty five years ago, until just a few short weeks ago, has nothing but accolades for her boss. "He is easy going, he's what I would call a "gentle leader". He's sincere and he's genuine," says Darlene. "He respects everyone who comes through that door or calls him." Darlene is also quick to point to Olive Krantz as an important part of the Mayor's team. "She is so approachable, there's no phoniness around either one of them." Long-time family friend Donna Coulter is quick to concur with the importance of the Mayor's open door policy. "I could always walk right into Town Hall and talk to him," she says. "Milton will always be his town. He is a hometown mayor who has been a good friend to everyone." Donna also points out the importance of Olive's role. "Behind every successful mayor is Olive," she says. "She's in the background, she's got

every little event recorded."

If you ask Mrs. Krantz though, those scrapbooks, and the history they've recorded, are just another tool for success in her husband's job. "He takes an interest in everything, in all the newspapers," she explains. "It's almost as though he's the guardian of the town." When asked about it, Mayor Krantz ponders for a moment before responding. "A guardian, a protector of the town's best interests - I guess that's one interpretation." He pauses, then continues "I probably would do it if I wasn't elected", referencing his many years as a firefighter, a job he had to give up when he became mayor.

Mayor Krantz admits that there are many lessons he has learned over the years, chief of which is "Kick your brain into gear before your mouth." His slow method of speech serves a purpose as "You'll have all kinds of thoughts but processing them openly or publicly can get you into a lot of trouble. I never say anything unless I want it repeated." That image of the folksy, down home mayor he fosters serves him well on occasion, but make no mistake about it, Gord Krantz is a nice guy, not a pushover.

"I refer to myself as an elastic band," he explains. "You can stretch me so far but sooner or later, even a good elastic band will snap back. And never try to con an old con man when it comes to the business of politics, I know it inside and out."

After forty years in office, twenty five of which were as mayor, there are still a few iron clad man-

dates that Mayor Krantz remembers each day. First and foremost, the former fuel man remembers that the town has to be thought of in business terms. "My priority 40 years ago and still today is running the town like a business," he says. "I never lose sight that it is a business." Combined with that business sense though, is a compassion that Councillor Brian Penman points out. "He's always made the same argument at budget meetings, our budgets are reflective of what he felt the community could afford." For Councillor Rick Day, it's the mayor's attention to the people behind every issue that illustrates the mayor's mandate for accessibility. "He welcomes delegations. He relaxes people because of his fairness, common sense, sense of humour and folksiness. People are comfortable with him, they know he's sincere." For Gord Krantz, born and raised in the town he now guides, that commitment is key. "There's not a big demand for used politicians, so you better be involved in your community," he jokes. That community commitment has seen him do some strange things over the years. One time, while wearing his coveralls and rubber boots and cleaning Victoria Park (which sits across from his home) on a Saturday, a busload of Japanese tourists stopped by. He chatted with the tour leader, before using his key to open Town Hall to them for a tour. He still laughs at the way some of the tourists were sure he was the janitor,



Martindale Garden Picnic, 2003



Santa Claus Parade, 1983 (with Grandson)



Children's Centre, 1998 Chess Tournament



Mississauga Mayor Her Worship Hazel McCallion and Milton Mayor Gordon Krantz, 1995 Greater Toronto Area Mayors and Chairs

right up to the final stop on the tour, his office.

He's also justifiably proud of the welcome he has offered to anyone crossing his doorway, no matter what their age. Every year, he leads tours for school children through Town Hall, often managing to incorporate lessons about the health risks of smoking and the importance of an education, along the way. All tours end in his office, with a trip to the jelly bean jar he refills on a regular basis. "If I'm never remembered for anything else, I'll be remembered as the mayor with the jelly bean jar," he shrugs. "Kids and I get along very well. I still at times act like one and I won't apologize for that."

It's been a long, eventful twenty-five years for Mayor Gord Krantz, years that have meant a great deal to him. "What I've been doing over the years has been worthwhile," he comments in parting. "I'm happy. I think I'm making an impact here and hopefully for the most part, a positive impact." When asked if he has any plans of retiring though, he lets out a booming laugh, winks and replies "I'd cheekily suggest that I retired 25 years ago from business. Now, I'm just doing something that I enjoy."



New Year's Eve 1992 Annual Bell Ringing Ceremony