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Ward 2 regional councillor Bill Robson

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Ward 2 councillor dies

Robson collapses at Region meeting

By **BRAD REAUME**
 Special to The Independent/Free Press

Drama of a different kind struck Halton regional council with astonishing speed Wednesday when Halton Hills councillor Bill Robson collapsed moments after speaking to council, and later died of an apparent heart attack.

Local residents in the council chambers, Dr. Deborah Zeni, Susan Glover-Takahashi and Halton Hills councillor Moya Johnson, attempted cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) within moments of Robson's collapse.

Robson had just spoken against instituting a ban on heavy trucks along Georgetown's Maple Avenue. A large number of people spoke on the matter, including residents, school officials and members of the business community.

The issue has been percolating at Halton Region

for two years. Council was poised on the edge of making a decision, debating a partial ban which would prohibit trucks along the roadway for two one-hour periods when students were on their way to and from school.

"It's not going to solve the problem," said Robson of the proposed ban, adding trucks would simply use other roads in Georgetown. "It discriminates against the aggregate industry and it discriminates against residents on other roads."

A few seconds after sitting down, Robson went limp in his council seat. While the council chambers were being cleared he was placed on the floor and efforts were made to revive him. An ambulance arrived within minutes. Attendants on the floor of the council chamber worked feverishly on Robson, who had apparently been experiencing some recent health problems. Attendants were continuing

efforts to resuscitate him even as they moved him to the ambulance for the trip to Oakville-Trafalgar Hospital.

Halton Hills mayor Marilyn Serjeantson was involved in initial attempts to revive Robson, and appeared shaken after medical personnel took over.

"He appeared agitated all afternoon on the Maple Avenue issue," said Burlington councillor Ralph Scholtens, who was sitting to the left of Robson.

"He just went down, his eyes rolled back in his head and he slumped," said Burlington councillor Barry Quinn, who was to Robson's right.

Councillors and regional officials seemed numbed by the tragedy and the speed in which it struck. Regional chair Joyce Savoline could only utter a horrified, "Oh, God."

The meeting was suspended.

Councillor fondly remembered by family and friends

By **LISA TALLYN**
 Staff writer

Councillor Bill Robson's family is still reeling from the news of his sudden death due to an apparent heart attack at Wednesday's regional council meeting.

Joan Robson, Bill's wife of 17 years, said her husband was pronounced dead at Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital at 5:45 p.m. Wednesday. He celebrated his 61st birthday in September.

Bill had been at his doctor's Tuesday for a check-up and was given a clean bill of health. Joan said his blood pressure was lower than it had ever been, which was unusual for Bill.

The family had been concerned because he had been very pale and tired for the past 10 days. Joan said during Bill's first term on council, his doctor believed he suffered a slight stroke and put him on medication for high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

She said when he left for the regional council meeting Wednesday he was pale and had been agonizing for some time over his vote on the Maple Ave. truck ban issue. He collapsed after he spoke on the controversial issue.



JOAN ROBSON

"He felt on the one hand he didn't want anybody's children bearing the brunt of the truck traffic, but he knew we didn't have the funds for a bypass and he was also thinking about jobs (of those in the aggregate industry and other businesses)," said Joan. "He took the issue very seriously and weighed all aspects of it carefully."

Joan said her husband enjoyed his work as a regional councillor. He was elected to the position in 1991 and again in 1994. Prior to entering politics Bill, a certified management accountant, worked as

president and chief executive officer of a major pharmaceutical corporation for 15 years.

"He was a very dedicated and honest politician. He found it impossible to be insincere and worked well with those who were sincere. He enjoyed the respect of his colleagues and respected those who were forthright," said Joan.

Joan added one of the things closest to Bill's heart was his work on the Niagara Escarpment Commission. "He felt the escarpment was a gift to the people of Halton Hills and Ontario. He didn't want to see something destroyed which couldn't be replaced."

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