

Halton's first police chief remembered by officers

Ken Skerrett is being remembered by senior Halton police officers as an innovative and approachable man who ably guided law enforcement through the growing pains of regional amalgamation.

The first chief of the newly-formed Halton Regional Police Force in 1974 — a fusion of the Milton, Burlington and Oakville police forces — Mr. Skerrett died at his Burlington home last week at the age of 80.

Mr. Skerrett was a chief of police for nearly 20 years having come over from the Hamilton Police Force in 1962 to serve as head of the old Burlington Police Force. He was named Halton chief in 1974 and retired in 1981, giving way to W.I. James Harding.

Burlington Sgt. Colin Vrooman has fond memories of working for Mr. Skerrett in Halton.

"He hired me back in 1970 when I came to Burlington. He was a very innovative chief; he always had the future in mind and usually he took a very new direction."

Sgt. Vrooman said Mr. Skerrett introduced team policing, which has since evolved into community policing, and also brought in a civilian social worker to aid detectives and adolescents in the area of youth crime.

The Burlington sergeant said Mr.

Skerrett had a tough job logistically speaking as the workforce he commanded more than doubled in size with amalgamation, increasing

to more than 200 officers in Halton as opposed to the 80 or so he had led in Burlington.

"I think he had the hardest job (of Halton's four police chiefs to date) because of regional amalgamation," said Sgt. Vrooman.

The veteran officer also remembers Mr. Skerrett for his sense of humour. "He wasn't a practical joker but he could tell you a joke with a lesson in it."

Burlington Det. Sgt. Joe Barker echoed Sgt. Vrooman's comments about the nature of Mr. Skerrett.

"He was a gentleman and always proud of the service. I think he was pretty well loved by everyone here."

Det. Sgt. Barker works with Mr. Skerrett's son, Steve, a detective in Burlington. He said the two joined Halton police on the same day in April, 1976.



Ken Skerrett

Current Halton Chief Ean Algar recalled being a constable and, later, a detective under Mr. Skerrett.

"He was an exceptional individual and always approachable. Rank didn't have its difference with the man."

"He always demonstrated to me about community participation. I remember him flipping pancakes with the Rotary Club."

Mr. Skerrett's history as a volunteer was almost as extensive as his policing resumé.

The former overseas member of the Canadian Army was a life member of the Royal Canadian Legion, from whom he received the Meritorious Service Award in 1993.

Mr. Skerrett was also a recipient of the Commemorative Medal for 125 years of Confederation, a Paul Harris Fellow as past president of the Burlington Lakeshore Rotary Club and Burlington's Citizen of the Year in 1978.

His other public service credits include work with the Burlington Association for the Intellectually Handicapped (Arc Industries), the Troubled Child Committee and the Burlington-Hamilton United Way.

An honour vigil of senior Halton officers attended Mr. Skerrett's funeral April 11 at Smith's Funeral Home in Burlington.

Local Scouts planting trees

Local Scouts, Cubs and Beavers will be busy planting trees on the Dufferin Aggregates quarry property tomorrow as part of Earth Week.

The 11th Annual Earth Week Celebration and Tree Planting with Scouts Canada (Oakville and Milton

District Scouts) will be held at the Dublin Line quarry from 8 a.m. to noon.

The event is part of an annual nationwide tree planting project sponsored by Scouts Canada. Tomorrow also marks the opening of a significant phase of the quarry rehabilitation project.

Announcement



David Dermo

Ray Samuels, C.E.O. and the Partners of Paradigm Power, a Direct Energy Marketing Company are pleased to announce that David Dermo, a long standing Milton resident recently concluded the period as the number one (1) energy consultant.

In his capacity as Energy Consultant, Mr. Dermo has been closely advising clients to stabilize their rates to avoid the volatility of spot market prices and share in rebates available through these programs.

Direct Energy Marketing Ltd. is the largest unregulated energy wholesaler in North America and are a wholly owned subsidiary of Centrica plc, a 40 billion dollar energy company that provides natural gas, electricity, automobile and financial services to nearly 20 million residential and commercial customers in Great Britain.

Whether you are responsible for a commercial/industrial operation in Milton or are concerned about your residential rates, please feel free to contact David for information on Direct Energy's "TRUE RATE" programs.

Phone: (905) 875-4444

Email: dermo@sympatico.ca



direct energy marketing limited

Thank you to our MDH Volunteers



April 22nd to April 28th is National Volunteer Appreciation Week. At Milton District Hospital, volunteers work throughout the hospital to enhance services and add a compassionate touch to the care the hospital provides.

At their last Annual Meeting in May, the Auxiliary donated \$105,000 to the hospital from their fundraising initiatives which include the Strawberry Fair, a Tea Wagon, HELPP Lottery, Baby Photos, BINGO, the Gift Shop and various sales and raffles.

Volunteers play an integral role not only in raising money for the hospital but also assisting staff in patient care.

"They are involved in everything from feeding patients to craft programs," says Sheila Richardson, an RN on the Complex Continuing Care Unit. "They just generally bring a lot of cheer to the floor."

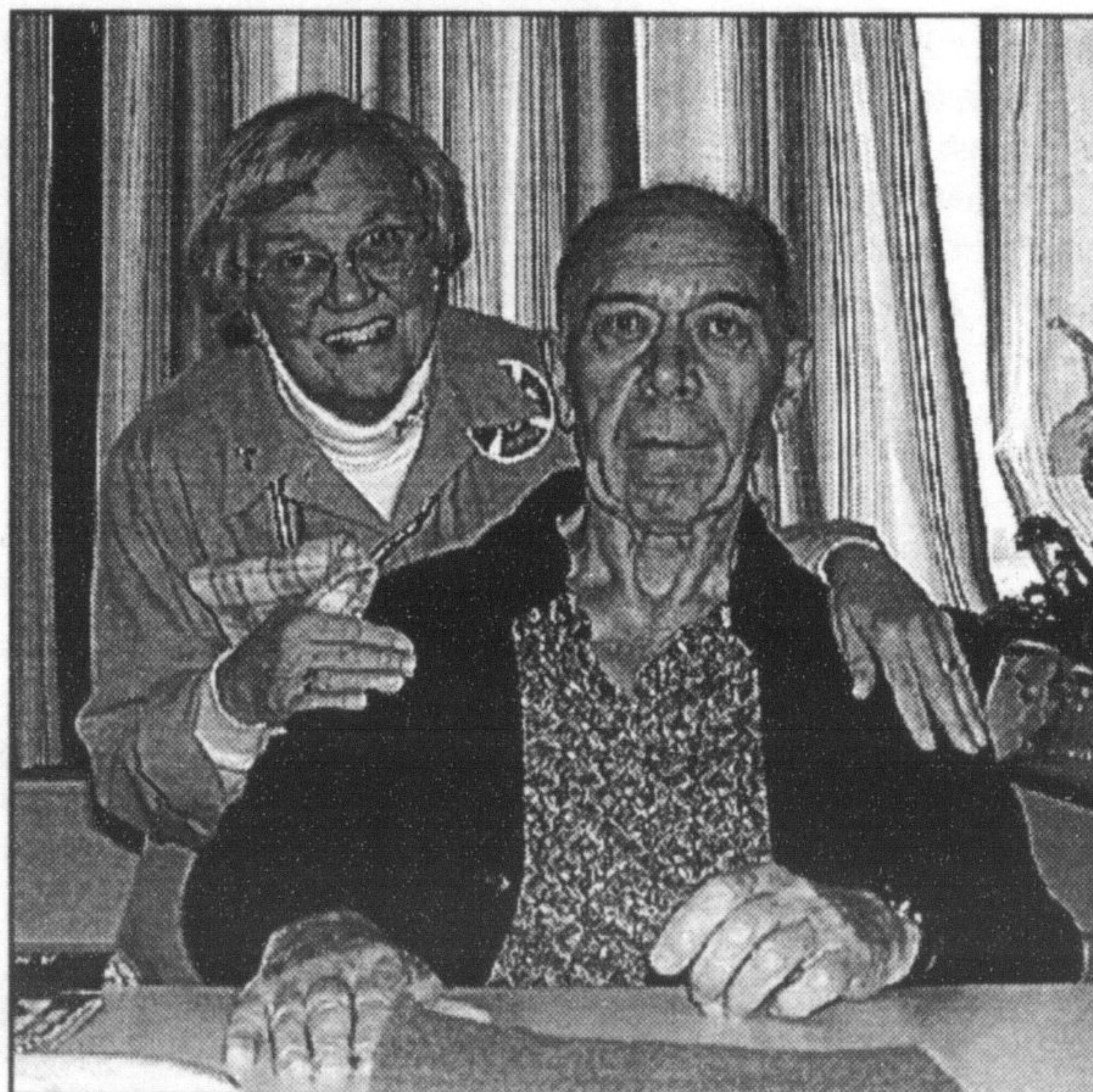
Volunteers on the unit have been trained so they can feed patients. "We have volunteers at every mealtime," says Elaine Burns, Patient Care Manager on the Unit. "There are some who are here every day."

They also repair and modify clothing for patients. "A lot of our patients have limited mobility and have trouble lifting their arms above their heads," explains Sheila. "Volunteers split the shirts at the back which reduces pain for the patients."

There is also a volunteer group that organizes a monthly tea for the unit. "They actually bring in a band," says Sheila. "There's lots of clapping. The patients really have a lot of fun."

Every Tuesday, there is a "Coffee and Caring" program provided by the Pastoral Care Volunteers. All patients who are able, sit down together and talk about "old times." "It's a really nice thing for everyone involved. The patients enjoy talking about their lives and bond because they are getting to know each other better," says Sheila. "It's nice for us because we learn more about our patients."

"We couldn't survive without them, I'll tell you that," says Sheila.



MDH volunteer Sol Austen helps Jack Rogers, a patient on the Complex Continuing Care Unit, at mealtime.

The MDH Auxiliary currently boasts 255 adult and 30 junior volunteers. New services provided by the volunteers include an Obstetrical Volunteer program that helps staff with stocking and other jobs and a portering service that helps transport patients to their various appointments throughout the hospital. If you are interested in volunteering at MDH, please call 905-878-2383.

Written by Rebecca Stoneman, Public Relations Associate at Halton Healthcare Services.

I Volunteer because...

We asked our volunteers why they donated their time and the following are some of their responses.

I volunteer because...

"I feel I should put something back into the community that I have lived in all my life."

I volunteer because...

"It's a wonderful way to give back to our terrific local hospital."

I volunteer because...

"The relaxed yet professional atmosphere of our hospital makes for such an inviting place to be - positive energy."

I volunteer because...

"It is a comfort to me to know that MDH is there when I need its services. I like feel that in some way, I am contributing to these essential services."