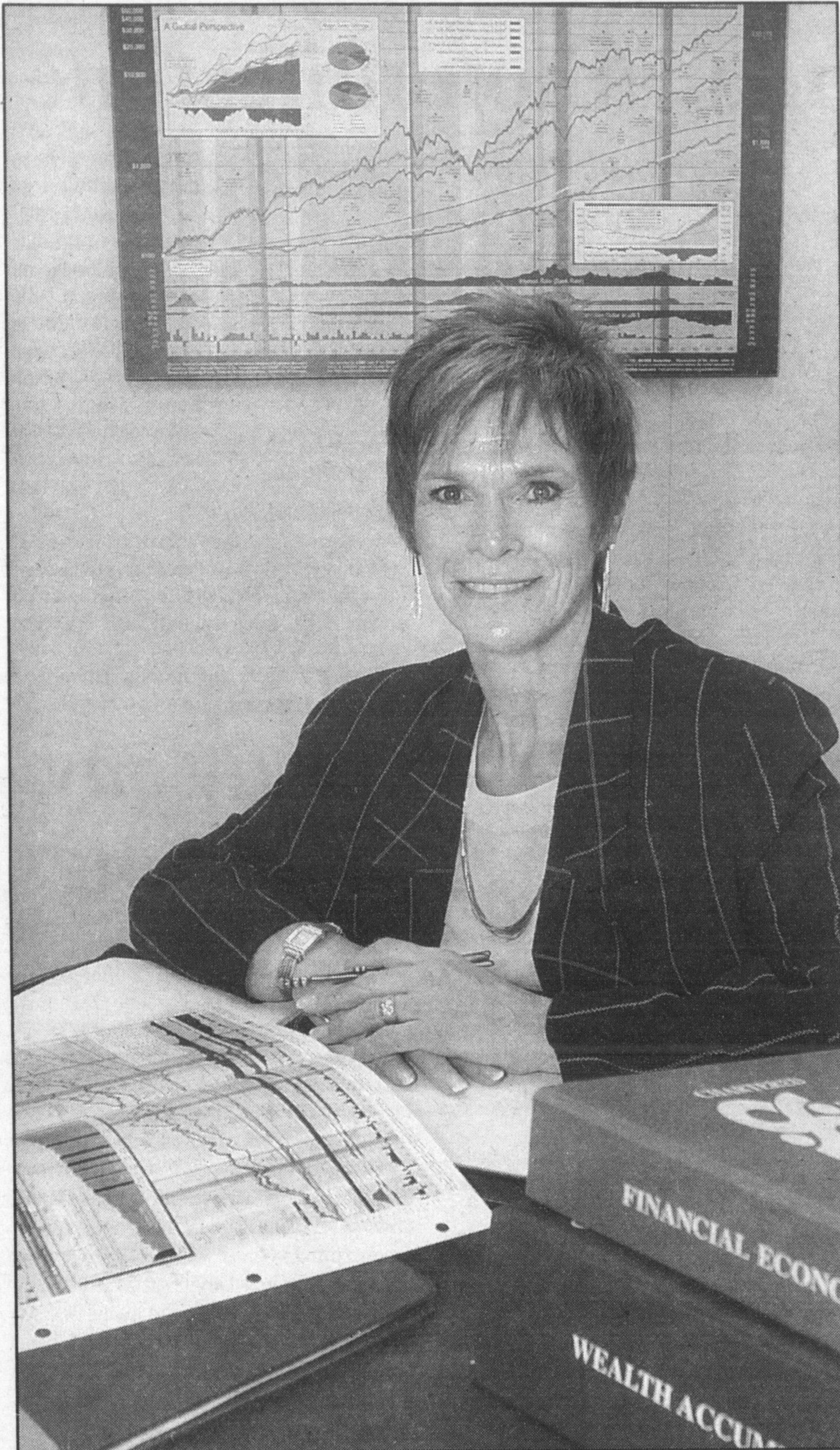


Milton • Means Business

Donaldson Financial Group celebrates 25th year



By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

Helena Donaldson's parents would be proud.

As founder and president of Donaldson Financial Group Inc., she said she still follows hard and fast the three principles her parents taught her while growing up: appreciate the value of money, think about the consequence of every action and respect other people's property.

"In what other business is this more applicable?" Ms Donaldson asked of financial institutions.

It's these three principles to which Ms Donaldson attributes the success of her business as Donaldson Financial Group celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

"Most people don't have the time or expertise to take care of their financial situations. We take that stress out of their lives," Ms Donaldson said.

Donaldson Financial Group is located at 310 Main St. E., suite 101. Its five employees work hard to serve 450 households, handling all their financial needs with the exceptions of accounting and general insurance.

While many clients reside in the Halton area, Ms Donaldson said she has clients who live everywhere from China to the U.S. — in most cases, they moved from the

Halton area but wanted to stay on with Donaldson Financial.

"I think that's one of the best accolades," Ms Donaldson said of her clients' loyalty.

Ms Donaldson's business philosophy is simple enough — give clients one-on-one attention and really get to know their needs. She said it's important that a client's financial institution fits "emotionally and mentally."

"You couldn't do a plan for someone without finding out what their needs are," she said matter-of-factly.

Ms Donaldson said clients often feel so comfortable with her advice that they call her up and ask her questions such as: Should I lend some money to my son? Should I buy a car?

"I'm a sounding board," she said. The idea to start a financial institution of her own came to Ms Donaldson after a rather frustrating experience as a secretary, she said.

"I remember receiving the same bonus as someone upstairs who was reading three novels a week. I thought, 'I don't want to be working in a salaried position. Whatever the amount of work I do, I want to be paid for it,'" she said, viewing commission sales as the way to go.

So, gathering her gumption, she opened Donaldson Financial Group in Oakville. When an office space opened here in town 16 years ago, Ms Donaldson said she decided to go for it and moved the com-

pany.

"It's a lovely town with wonderful people so I thought, 'Why not?'"

Of course, Donaldson Financial has faced many challenges over the past 25 years. One of the biggest has been over the past three years when, Ms Donaldson said, the markets have been at their worst. It's in these difficult times that Ms Donaldson said the one-on-one relationship is particularly important. "We need to be there for them and feel their pain," she said.

Ms Donaldson's goal is to eventually employ a lawyer and an accountant to offer clients one-stop shopping, she said.

Although her job requires long hours and weekend work, Ms Donaldson said she doesn't mind.

"I talk to clients Saturdays, Sundays and in the evenings. It's the least I can do."

Her job is extremely rewarding, Ms Donaldson said.

From the young couple that's able to buy a home sooner than they expected, to the man who's able to retire when he's still healthy and active — these stories make all the long hours worth it, she said.

"I get postcards from people all over the world saying, 'It's thanks to you that we're here.' I thank my lucky stars that I've been given the opportunity to do this."

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Milton's Eco Solutions stocking up on natural de-icing products

A Milton company is the exclusive Ontario distributor of a product it calls "the cutting edge on snow removal technologies."

Now that summer's nearing an end, Eco Solutions on Lower Base Line is preparing for the cold weather, stocking its shelves with three all natural agricultural liquid de-icing products — Geomelt, Biomelt and Mountain melt.

"Our liquid anti-icing and de-icing products are environmentally friendly," reported an Eco Solutions press release. "They are made from agricultural-based ingredients such as sugar, beets and corn."

The company said the products don't have the same harmful effects on the environment salt does.

They're made by the Iowa, U.S. company Grain Processing Corporation.

Helena Donaldson, president of Donaldson Financial Group, is proud of her company's accomplishments.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

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