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A Metroland Media Group Publication • Vol. 147 No. 104

Tuesday, March 6, 2007

44 Pages • \$1.00 (incl. G.S.T.)

## Early morning blaze claims elderly man



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**FATAL FIRE:** Firefighters continue to douse the inside of a Steeles Avenue home hours after a blaze broke out early Saturday morning. Bertram Day, 88, died in the fire.

**By Stephanie Thiessen**  
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

An 88-year-old man — the father of a Milton councillor — was killed in a house fire early Saturday morning on Steeles Avenue, less than two weeks after the death of his beloved wife.

Ward 1 Councillor Rick Day has no doubt that his father, Bertram Day, who suffered from short-term memory dementia, didn't make it out in time because he was searching for his wife in the blazing home he had built decades earlier.

"He was looking for her and left it too long," Day said.

It was the first accidental fire death in Milton in at least three decades, said Fire Chief Larry Brassard.

Firefighters responded to the 6,000-square-foot home near Tremaine Road shortly after 4 a.m. after receiving a call from the elderly man's caregiver. She had run barefoot to a neighbour's home after discovering the phone lines in the house were dead, Brassard explained.

**Firefighters risked their lives**

Firefighters from all three stations responded and, after hearing there was a man still inside, risked their lives to go into the house, Brassard said.

But they were quickly pushed back by a wall of fire.

"They made a valiant attempt to save the victim. But it was humanly impossible to enter further," Brassard said. "The house was an inferno."

Water had to be trucked in, and strong winds added to the difficulty of knocking down the blaze, which took 45 firefighters more than an hour to get under control.

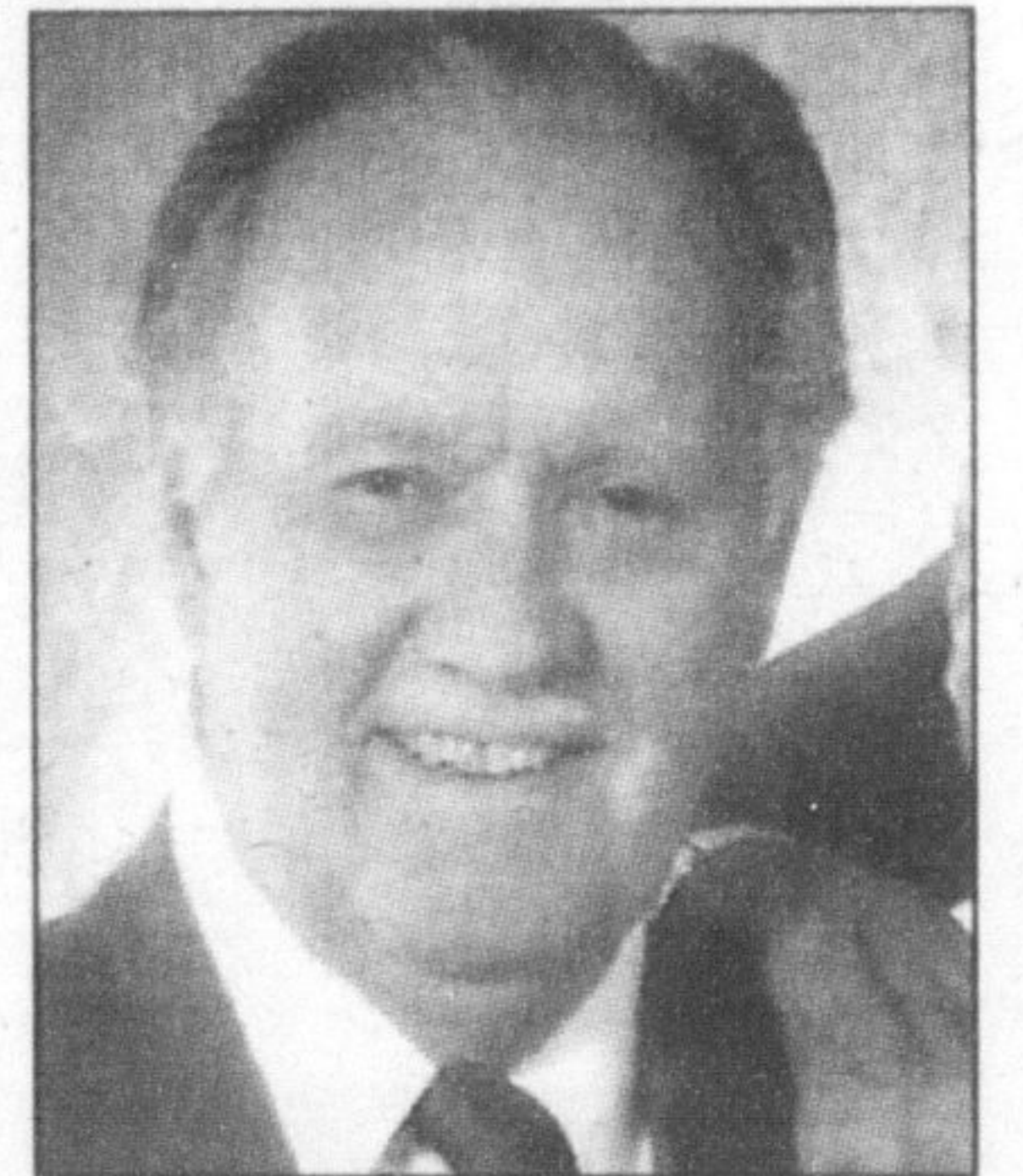
The body of the victim — whose identity wasn't released by Halton police — was found in the hallway.

"It appears to us he was trying to get out and was overcome by smoke," Brassard said.

A post-mortem indicated he died from acute smoke inhalation. Police

said foul play isn't suspected.

The cause of the tragedy is under investigation by the Ontario Fire Marshal's Office.



**Bertram Day**

Day said he can't understand what could've caused the fire. The house had been made safe for both kids and the elderly and there were 16 working smoke alarms.

It was a baby monitor running from the room of the caregiver to Day's father's room that woke the young woman, Day said, explaining she heard him calling out. Fortunately, she was able to make it out.

Day was an entrepreneur with a background in forestry. He toiled in the

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