



Photo by RIZIERO VERTOLLI

Former MPP Jim Snow has published a book that traces his life along with local history.

## Snow scripts memoirs of a busy life

By WILMA BLOKHUIS  
Special to The Champion  
They called him 'Mr. Jim'.

A big man, he stands proudly in front of Queen's Park in the photograph on the cover of his memoirs, a 350-page book on the man who's best known for his 18 years at the Ontario legislature.

His autobiography's title, *Mr. Jim* is a handle he was given by the Italian bricklayers, labourers and cement workers he employed through Snow Construction in the 1950s. The book is subtitled "From Esqueving, the Land of the Tall Pines. The Personal Recollections of James W. Snow, farmer, contractor, businessman, aviator and politician."

To that list of achievements he can add computer buff, historian and writer.

"I'm a bit of a computer nut," he says, explaining he wrote the manuscript, then organized the layout of the book, including scanning the 205 photographs and placing them into the appropriate chapters. He published the book himself. There were 100 hardcover copies ordered for family and friends and 900 soft covers to be sold to those interested in a bit of local history and the

life of one of the area's native sons.

Mr. Snow spent four months at his word processor writing the detailed narrative of his life.

"I never thought I'd end up with a 350 page book," he said.

"I started the book after my mother died in October, 1989. The idea came to me as I was researching her family history."

After losing several of the senior members of his family, Mr. Snow felt he was also losing his link with the past.

"I decided to write the book for my grandchildren and my great grandchildren so they can have some idea of where they come from."

The text presents his life in chronological order starting in 1929, the year of his birth.

"After describing my family history, there's a chapter on the 'Dirty '30s', the days during the depression when I wore patched overalls to school," said Mr. Snow.

He was too young to serve in the Second World War and after the war started his construction business in Oakville. He bought his present home, Pineland Farm in Hornby, in 1959. He has rebuilt the barn, which has been humorously dubbed "The

Hornby Hilton" and more recently, "The Snow Dome," due to the many charitable events he hosts. Milton District Hospital was one of the recent beneficiaries of his hospitality.

Elected to Queen's Park in 1967, he retired in 1985. He spent many of those years as minister of transportation and his barn is filled with gold plated shovels, hard hats and photographs of the many highway and bridge openings he attended. Personalized licence plates, political cartoons and baseball caps from various projects also help chronicle his career in politics.

"I was the second longest serving member for Halton area next to Stanley Hall, who served 19 years from 1943 to 1962."

Of his government years he wrote, "Over those 18 years of political service, I had many proud accomplishments. Many of my ideas and proposals, both when I was a backbencher and a minister, local and province wide, were accepted and implemented."

His credits include the opening of Bronte Creek Provincial Park, Ontario's seat belt legislation, photo identification cards with drivers' licences, and the Terry Fox Monument and Lookout near Sudbury.

Among his disappointments Mr. Snow lists his failed bid in 1982 for the domed stadium near Highway 403 on the Oakville-Mississauga border. The site, he said, had sufficient government land to provide plenty of parking and a GO train stop.

"This site would have been right in the centre of a population of over 5,000,000 people that would be in a 50-mile travelling radius," from Oshawa to Niagara Falls. "I guess it was too much to expect that a site outside of downtown Toronto had a chance," he lamented. "I and many others still believe that my proposal was the best site."

The book, its text interspersed with pictures of his family, civic functions, an array of pets and livestock, his construction years, fishing trips and grandchildren, concludes with a wry political comment.

"One thing that (Pierre) Trudeau and (Brian) Mulroney have not outlawed, at least not yet, is dreaming, and as long as I am alive, I reserve the right to dream."

"As long as I stay outside those government buildings, I can dream and smoke my pipe in peace. Pineland provides a great atmosphere for both, so I intend to spend a lot more time there in the near future." At age 61, Jim Snow is going to enjoy his retirement.

Mr. Jim is available at the gift shop at Milton District Hospital as a fundraiser for the hospital. The book sells for between \$20 and \$25.

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