Classic Life in Southern York. Aug Sept 1988

DUFFY, AL

Richmond Hill Mayor **Al Duffy** is surrounded by female mayors. Duffy was born in Toronto "the middle of Cabbage Town" in 1943. He attended Central Technical School and Ryerson and studied industrial management and technology. "I was the shortest kid in school" he recalled but added; "I wasn't as short as Twinney (Mayor Ray Twinney of Newmarket). At school he was interested in sports and drama, which led to politics, "real drama."

Duffy was married to Elinor in 1964 and they moved to Richmond Hill "because they couldn't afford to buy a home in Toronto." Although commuting to Toronto to work, Duffy soon became involved in ratepayer groups leading to his election as Ward 2 councilor in 1974, "by seven votes.".

He was re-elected in 1976 and was acclaimed in 1978.

With no incumbent seeking the office of mayor in 1982, Duffy won a three way race for the position and was re-elected in 1985 by acclamation.

Highlights of his years in office include the financial record of the municipality as "we have never borrowed money for capital projects"; the grade separation on Major Mackenzie Drive after 15 years; Beaver Creek Industrial Park; water and sewer services to Lake Wilcox and Oak Ridges; new and renovated recreation facilities and the works yard and fair grounds plus full time firefighters for Oak Ridges.

On the downside, he is disappointed that he has not been able to get all industry off Yonge Street "to make the downtown look better"; and not being able to obtain more industry to provide a more balanced assessment base.

Many problems that the Lake Wilcox property owners had experienced have been rectified with the adoption of a "flexible" zoning bylaw "which makes all the lots legal," Duffy said.

Duffy said he has been asked to run for higher office by the Liberal party, but "I want to open the civic centre, so right now I am just interested in getting re-elected as mayor".

To date, he has no announced opposition but one candidate has said he will run for regional councilor or mayor.

Four municipalities, four mayors, all different, yet still very much the same.◆