

Art Latcham

Donations highlight his life



ART LATCHAM

There have been many people who have made great contributions to the growth of Stouffville, but only one man stands out for the number of unselfish donations to this and many other towns.

The man is of course Arthur Latcham, who, by donating the numerous buildings and structures that have improved the town immensely, has achieved a bit of immortality.

The list of donations are impressive; he gave \$70,000 for the town's swimming pool, the floodlights, the grandstand and public shelter. He has given Community centres in Ballantrae, Altona, a hospital in Markham, floodlights and hall in Goodwood, and of course the magnificent Latcham Hall in town.

The Hall was the culmination of his efforts and they were duly noted at the Art Latcham day, held on the July 1st weekend, 1972.

But the donations are not the true reflection of the man. He has given countless hours of pleasure to innumerable people from his great skill at magic. How many people have seen him walk down Main St. with

a coin or cards in his deft hands, forever perfecting and showing his magician's skill?

An indication of how he is appreciated by the town was evident on Latcham Day. He was showered with gifts by the townspeople, who came by the thousands, possibly the largest crowd ever at a single site in Stouffville's history.

On that day there were also an impressive number of dignitaries out to honor the man. John Roberts, Bill Hodgson, Mayor Ken Laushway, along with the service club representatives.

Even Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was there, in spirit, at least, as Mr. Roberts read a personal letter to Mr. Latcham from the P.M., giving his congratulations.

Listing Mr. Latcham's awards and plaques would be near impossible, but some of the most meaningful have been the Gold Key of Freedom to the town, presented at his day. Countless scrolls, paintings, plaques and other mementoes of his achievements cluster his home as a daily reminder of what the man has done.

Mr. Latcham's background tells the story of how his man-made fortune came about. His main endeavours have been in the golf business, buying and selling courses and ranges in Toronto and surrounding areas.

He was born in the town of Glasgow, Ontario but always considered Stouffville as his home town, as he has lived much of his life here.

Besides his golf courses, Mr. Latcham also at one time owned nickel mines, parking lots, plazas and apartments all over Ontario. He was a self-made millionaire and had a remarkable ability to bounce back from adversity. Even when the depression wiped out all his financial holdings, he just turned around and made himself another fortune.

For all his donations, public appearances and exposure, Mr. Latcham was basically a man who kept to himself. He did not belong to any town organization or club and he liked the privacy his house afforded him. Conversely, however, he enjoyed immensely showing off his magic

tricks and just talking to anyone passing by.

His other interests included hunting, flying his private plane, amateur boxing and of course, helping people.

One of his interests that led to an unusual ending was his love of natural food. Mr. Latcham did not smoke, or drink and was a great exponent of good health through natural foods. And his looks, be-guiling his years are a testimonial to the fine shape he kept himself in.

His interest in natural foods led him to convince the town's bakery to prepare a special whole wheat bread for him, which they still make and is a big seller. In an attempt to make others appreciate the benefits of natural foods, Mr. Latcham purchased thousands of books on the subject and then distributed them free throughout the town.

This might seem a bit eccentric, but Mr. Latcham really isn't. Many consider him just an ordinary, common man who would stop and talk to anyone, and who never abused his wealth or power.

Society's aim to keep town beautiful

"Beauty brings business," is a slogan that the members of the Stouffville Horticultural society keep in mind as they go about planting gardens and enhancing the community.

The society began in 1924 and the first president was Dr. F.A. Dales, who lived in the house that Dr. Morgan now uses for his dental

practice. Mrs. Alice Vaque is the president this year. The membership started at \$1 and somehow they've managed to avoid inflation and have kept the same fee through the years.

Vice president of the society back then was Thomas Klinck, and second vice president was Mrs. S.S. Ball.

The society has received many prizes at various exhibits, including laurels from the Canadian National Exhibition, parades and flower shows and garden parties around Stouffville.

The new Whitchurch-Stouffville Library is just

one organization that the society has helped, as it recently received a \$500 donation from them.

Unfortunately the members of the society find they can't get out and plant the beautiful gardens that they once did because they are growing older and the younger

members don't seem as interested.

The planners of Parkview received help from the Society for the grounds and gardens.

The 50th Anniversary celebration of the society was held on Monday evening, April 15 in St. James Presbyterian

Church. Reverend Douglas Davis, in a short speech, detailed the contribution to the society of the late Margery Mertens. In her memory, a niece, Mrs. Mervin Bunker, presented an engraved silver tray to the Society from the Goudie family.

In memory of the late Reverend Douglas Davis who was an honorary director, a silver tray was presented to the society by Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Muir.

Mrs. Douglas Davis also gave an endowment to the Society in memory of her late husband.

Town lucky it has depot

Waste can be a problem in any town if the facilities are not available to dispose all of the unwanted garbage. Stouffville however, is lucky; we have a recycling depot right in the centre of town.

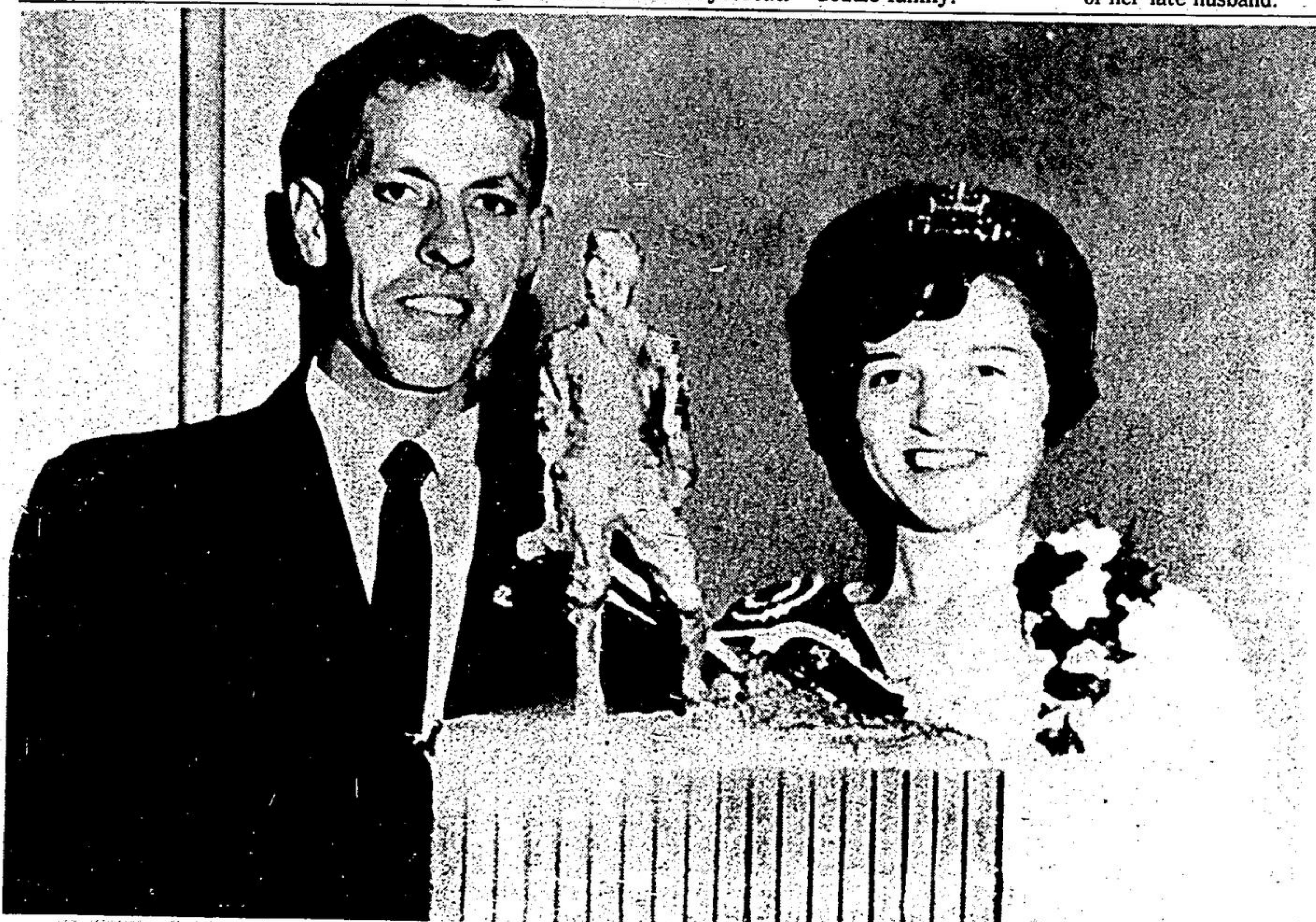
The depot was organized in December of 1975, by Jean Belisle, Carol McDermott and John Garbutt, who felt that it was about time the town did something about the increasing amount of trash that either littered the town or a nearby dump, which could easily be recycled and put to good use.

The town was a little unsure about this operation at first, and granted them only a small garage behind the Bank of Commerce. But the staff increased and Joyce Nailor and Bryan Nicholas joined the team and 45 volunteers were enlisted in the fight for a clean city, and soon the town realized that it was

working. The people of the town were bringing their garbage to the depot and the town began to look a little cleaner. So the town decided to build a new depot.

The depot is now open on Thursday and Saturday mornings and the volunteers work two hours every month, with the schedule made up four months in advance. This makes it easier for the volunteer to make plans around his time slot and Jean Belisle phones the volunteers two days before they work to remind them. Spademan Waste Removal takes the bins downtown when they are full and the money received for the materials for recycling is put towards the small sum that Spademan charges for shipping the materials.

Jean says "it's a lot of work but I think it's worthwhile."



Plowing a field may not seem to be an art form for many people, but don't say that to Grant Wells. Mr. Wells, in this 1967 photo, in Rhodesia was declared Canadian

Plowman champion and gave Stouffville another local and national personality.