

Widdifield set to fill his last prescription

By KATE GILDERDALE
 It will be the end of an era when pharmacist Doug Widdifield's drug store at the Stouffville Plaza becomes part of the Shoppers Drug Mart chain Dec. 1.
 Although his last day as owner is officially over Nov. 30, Doug will continue to work in the store part time until Christmas.
 After that, "I'm getting out of the pharmacy business completely. I want to be involved in something totally different."
 He plans to consider his future while taking a well-earned break. "I would like to take three to six months off," he explains. "I've been a pharmacist for 29 years and I worked in drug stores for 10 years before that." After so long, says Doug, he feels it's time for a change.
 When he first came to Stouffville, he worked part time here and part time in Toronto, as part of a partnership which owned both locations.
 "Then it became so busy, I stayed up here full time." He has lived in town since 1960. "I opened this store on Nov. 14, 1967 with 2,240 square feet," recalls Doug. "We took over the laundromat in 1979, adding another 1,120 square feet."
 In September 1985, he took over the beauty salon and mens wear stores to the east of the drug store, while part of his original space to the west was taken over by the Toronto Dominion Bank.
 "I ended up with 4,760 square feet," he states. He started his

search for a new owner at the beginning of July this year.
 Doug has served Parkview Seniors Home almost from the beginning and has come to know many people in Stouffville through his business.
 He leaves with decidedly mixed feelings, and says he'll miss staff members, some of whom have been with him for years.
 "It hasn't hit me yet, but I'm going to miss everybody, they're all personal friends," he says.
 The new management will take on existing staff members. "As far as I know all employees are going to stay," he noted.
 Although there's bound to be some trepidation when a change like this takes place, he feels they will be well-looked after by Shoppers.
 Ann Marie Spice, who has been at the store for eight years, admits things won't be the same when Doug leaves. "It's hard to put into words. We're going to miss him, there's no doubt about it. We can talk to him about things; he's always been a good listener."
 Says Marilyn Summerfeldt: "I've been here 12 years. It's really going to be a new start for all of us. I'm going to miss him, we all will." Both agreed that Doug Widdifield is "one of a kind."
 He likes to work with his hands, and has become a proficient handyman during his years in business.

"When something breaks down, you have to fix it," he points out. "I've learned how to fix anything in the store."
 He's also worked hard to restore a property the family owns in Orillia. "I used 80 gallons of paint on it," he grins.
 His wife Joy taught for a year at Summitview Public School when they first came to Stouffville, before leaving to concentrate on her family.
 Kevin is the oldest at 27, and is working at the Toronto Dominion Bank in Toronto; Colin, 22, is in his last year of languages at the University of Toronto, and hopes to teach in Japan when he finishes.
 Michael is in his first year of high school and, like his brothers before him, helps out at his dad's store in his spare time.
 Doug was an elder at Stouffville United Church for four years and on the church board for four years, and was chairman of the finance committee for one year.
 He served a year's term as Chairman of the Cancer Society and was a member of the Lion's Club when he first came to town, but working on shifts has limited his outside activities.
 "I'd like to get more active and get involved in something different," he says.
 But he and his family won't be leaving Stouffville, he insists. "We've been here 28 years. We don't plan on moving." On Tues-

day Nov. 8, Doug took his staff out to dinner at the Maples of Ballantrae and they had a memorable evening.
 "I've enjoyed it very much and the customers, that's here," he concludes. "I've had a great relationship with the staff miss."

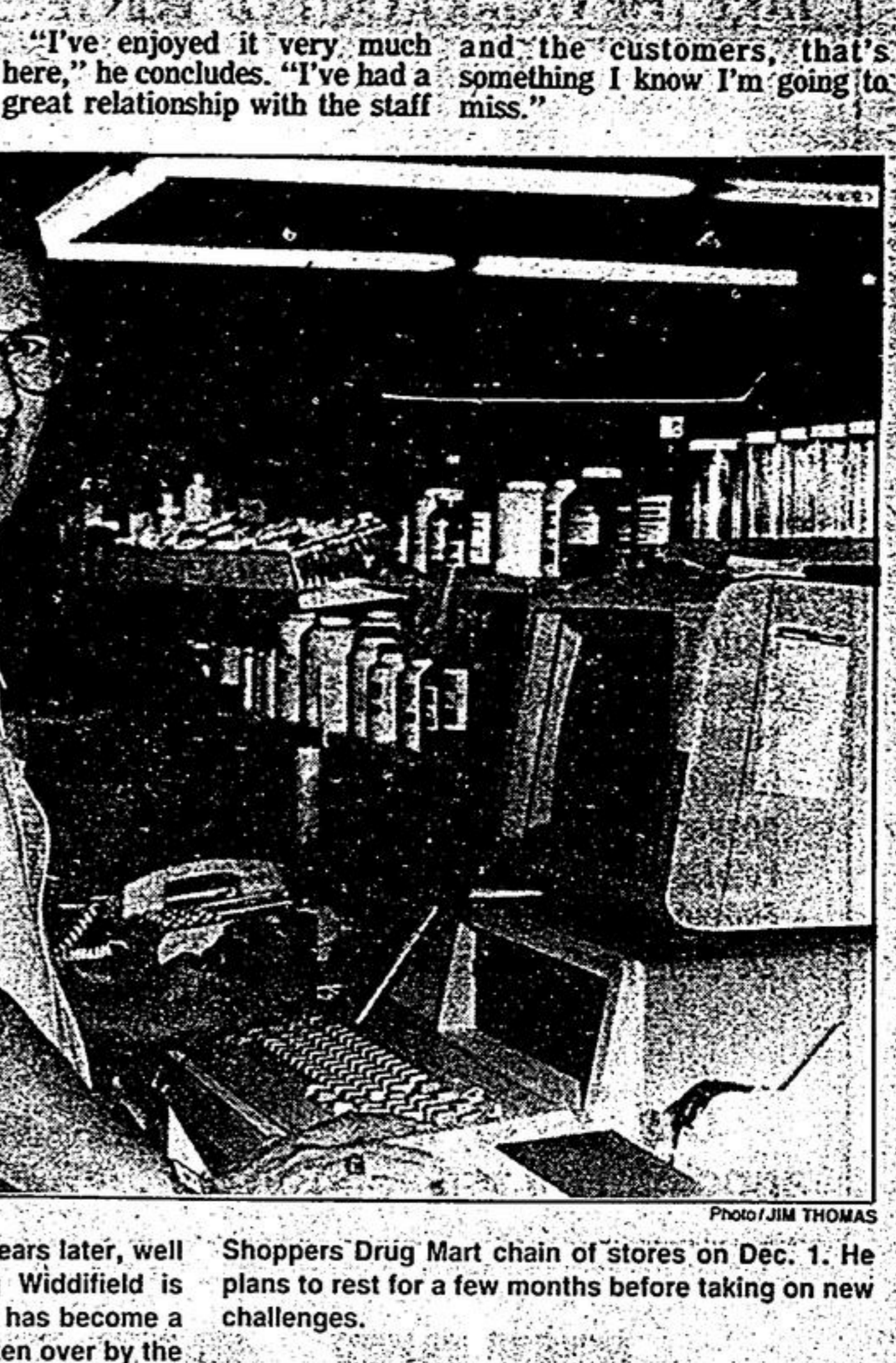



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