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Local teaching couple ready to start a brand new life

BRUCE STAPLEY
 Correspondent

Jack and Jan McBride are leaving things just as they found them when they started teaching at Stouffville District Secondary School 24 years ago.

The Stouffville couple have decided to retire this spring, choosing a life of volunteer work and travel after 32 years in the work force.

And they are just as high on Stouffville, and the students at SDSS, as they were when they decided to call the village "home" in 1965.

"The kids have changed very little in things that matter," insists Jan. "They are still honest and up front. They are not political animals — you know where you stand with them."

"I'm having one of my best years this year, as far as the kids go," adds Jack. "It makes it easy to teach that long when the kids are that good."

The McBrides, who have been married 30 years, mixed in the raising of three children, a two-year stint in Uganda when Idi Amin was taking power and a seven-month trip around the world with their respective tenures at SDSS.

At one point, the whole family was at the high school, either as



Photo by BRUCE STAPLEY

Jack and Jan McBride are ready to retire from of teaching. The Stouffville couple are choosing a Stouffville District Secondary School after 24 years life of volunteer work and travel.

teachers or as students. Jan has taught all three McBride children.

Jan, who was head of the school's physical education department from 1974 to 1985, has been involved in special education since 1986.

Jack was Commercial Director at SDSS from 1965 through 1970. He helped design and set up the new commercial wing in 1967. After his two-year teaching "sabbatical" in Uganda, he returned to the Stouffville school as a business teacher.

In 1985, the two took advantage of a Board of Education program that sees teachers take only 80 per cent of their salary for four years, then take a year off with pay.

They took off to tour the South Pacific, South East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

And now that they have decid-

ed to step down, they intend to see the rest of the world. "There's still a lot of places we haven't seen yet," says Jan. "We'll travel and do volunteer work. We're really not interested in another paying career. We don't want to get involved in anything that would tie us down."

The McBrides will begin their retirement by planning and presiding over their daughter's wedding, to be performed in the back yard of their Church St. home.

They intend to sell their house and take up occupancy in the Vancouver house they bought two years ago.

"I'd like to do some literacy work with the native Canadians in Vancouver," says Jan.

The McBrides will take along with them a collection of positive memories of their years as

teachers at SDSS. "We initially moved to Stouffville because we thought it would be a good place to raise our kids. The kids at the school have always been great."

Jan claims they never had a problem teaching in the town in which they lived. "A lot of teachers say they won't teach where they live. But I always felt I had nothing to hide in my personal life. The kids would see up shopping, at the Sales Barn, in a sweatshirt, and they'd seem to respect us more."

"They would see us as moms and dads as well as teachers. That's the payoff as far as I'm concerned, the kids."

The McBrides do have a few concerns as they leave the teaching profession, however. "There's no continuity any more in education. People are always moving around, especially in the administrative positions. I don't think it's really good for the kids."

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