

Stouffville a better place due to Latcham's generosity

From page 1

"Any town would kill to have a benefactor like him," said Jim Thomas, a longtime friend of Latcham. "But I never thought people really appreciated his donations. They would say, 'Well he's got all this money, what else is he going to do with it?' Well, he didn't have to give it away. They didn't appreciate the goose that laid the golden egg."

Latcham was born poor in Uxbridge township but, upon returning to Toronto from service in the First World War, he began to build his fortune in real estate.

The story goes that his first real estate venture failed. He went broke," Thomas said.

But he went on to make his fortune mainly by building golf courses, even though "he didn't know anything about golf."

GIVING MONEY AWAY

He later settled in Stouffville, where he established the Arthur Latcham Charitable Foundation in 1969 and began giving his money away for any good cause.

Leslie Clarke, also a longtime friend, administered Latcham's donations through the foundation and knew the man well. He said Latcham would often just hear about something worthwhile and come into his office to arrange to offer some money.

"If somebody needed floodlights or, for example, the Uxbridge pool, when they built that, they discovered it had just a terrible echo. So he gave them the \$15,000 they needed for the materials (to correct that)," Clarke said.

Latcham also funded community halls in Pickering, Goodwood, Port Perry, Lemonville and Altona, among others. Some of these were refurbished one-room schoolhouses, which Latcham would buy and turn into community centres.

Every December, he would give to countless organizations such as the Hospital for Sick Children and the Fred Victor mission for the homeless in Toronto, the Yellow Brick House, the Salvation Army, the Toronto Star Santa Claus Fund and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

Clarke, who worked for years as Latcham's insurance agent in Stouffville, still has the records of all the cheques written in the name of the Latcham Foundation, totalling nearly \$900,000 from 1971 to 1995 when funds ran out. That's an average of nearly \$35,000 per year for 25 years.

Clarke said part of the reason Latcham was involved in so many community hall projects was his desire to entertain.

"He enjoyed going somewhere, being in a crowd to do his card tricks," Clarke said.

For while Latcham was known both for his wealth and his incredible generosity, he was famous for his sleight of hand coin and card tricks.

"He was a world-class magician. They say he was the best card shark in the world," Thomas said.

Latcham was so good with cards that he was banned from the gambling houses of Las Vegas, he said.

All he cared about was being there with an audience of children. He was an eccentric, so he was very much held at arm's length by the adults who didn't know him well. But the children loved him.

Latcham died in 1979 and, while he gave so much to be enjoyed by so many, it seems he is not so well remembered in Stouffville. A picture of him hangs untitled in the Stouffville

Library, where one can also find a collection of more than 300 rare books on magic purchased with funds from the Latcham Foundation after his death.

Stouffville's own Magic Festival of the 1980s, a precursor to the Strawberry Festival, was inspired in part by Latcham, but was short-lived.

"Many people who are moving into the area wouldn't even know who he was," said Thomas.

Yet anyone who has cracked a bat, enjoyed a picnic under the shelter or splashed in the pool at Memorial Park has benefited from his generosity.

Summer Lawn Watering Restrictions

Water FOR Tomorrow
www.yorkwater.on.ca

Now in Effect!

Hot summers strain water supplies. Municipal lawn watering restrictions are now in effect. Watch for details in your local newspaper.

Use sprinklers that spray close to the ground.

Wise Tips

- Water early in the morning.
- Use soaker hoses for garden beds.
- Cut grass high and leave clippings on the lawn.

Lawns need just 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water a week.

Use an empty tuna can to gauge how much water has fallen, and how much more watering is needed. When the can is full, turn off the water.

Ontario's Rising Star
York Region
Markham • Vaughan • Richmond Hill • Newmarket • Aurora
Georgina • Whitchurch-Stouffville • East Gwillimbury • King

a beachcomber hot tub improves your living space

BEACHCOMBER Hot Tubs & Spas SINCE 1974

a beachcomber hot tub

is like having a permanent vacation spot right outside your back door. When you buy a new beachcomber hot tub you can get an extra value option package including the "instant room" swingbrella \$278 - whole package worth over \$2000.00 for only (limited time offer)

SEAWAY
POOLS • BILLIARDS • HOT TUBS

25 HERITAGE RD.,
1 NORTH OF HWY #7
AT MCCOWAN, MARKHAM
294-8030

Hours:
Mon - Wed 9-7pm Saturday 9-5pm
Thurs - Fri 9-8pm Sunday 10-4pm

Closed June 29

SICILIA GARDENS INC.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED WE HAVE:

- Retaining wall systems
- Patio slabs
- Triple mix
- Rockery stone
- Limestone
- Gravel
- Sand
- Mulch (cedar or natural)
- Firewood
- Trees, shrubs and roses
- Wide selection of Annuals & Perennials still available
- Landscaper Discount
- Interlocking stone
- Top soil

PERMA PAVING STONE CO. Brooklin 20

12902 10th LINE N., STOUFFVILLE
(Just north of the Flea Market)
(905) 640-3727 (905) 472-3724

BUY DIRECT & SAVE \$\$\$\$

Happy Canada Day from Markham's Proud To Be Canadian Association

PROUD TO BE CANADIAN
Fier D'être Canadien

Some of Markham's Proud To Be Canadian Association members at the Unionville festival. L-R Tony Murphy, Lloyd & Karen Schneider, Danny Fantini, Bob Foster, Millie Davies, Margaret Ackroyd, Art Underwood, John Harris, Margaret & Ken Moore, John Hawco. Special thanks to Danny Fantini for use of his antique fire truck, Markham Outdoor Power for their PTBC Mobile and Markham Hydro for the printing of the 3000 Canada Flag postcards which were handed out at the parade. A list of flag flying families is posted on the PTBC display, at the Markville Shopping Centre. Hope to see you at the Peoples Parade to Milne park for Canada Day activities. Parade leaves the Markville Shopping Centre parking lot at 4 p.m. Come dressed in red and white. The Proud To Be Canadian Association will give flags and poles to the 5 most patriotic dressed.