

Doctor honoured for helping deliver Stouffville's baby boomers

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

For many Stouffville baby boomers and their families, Dr. John Button will always be a familiar and reassuring presence.

During his 30-year obstetrical practice in town, he delivered more than 100 babies each year and cared for them as they grew up.

Many came to Dr. Button when it was time for their own babies to be born.

To recognize his decades of service, the Stouffville Rotary Club presented Dr. Button with a Distinguished Service award Monday.

The honour recognizes "the past work that has gone on in the town to make us what we are today", said Rotary member Ken Prentice.

Dr. Button was named Stouffville's Citizen of the Year in 1983.

After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1940, he interned at Toronto Western Hospital for a year.

Shortly after, he joined the Canadian Air Force and served as a medical doctor for four years.

In September 1941, he was transferred to the recruiting centre in Winnipeg.

He and his wife June married in 1942. The couple moved to Fort William, back to Winnipeg where Dr. Button was the medical officer at the Wireless School and to Watson Lake in the Yukon. It wasn't until 1946 that he returned to Stouffville.

He and June have three grown children, Jocelyn, Barbara and Janet. And, he says proudly, 'I have eight grandchildren.'

"I was the young doctor coming on the scene then," he recalled.

At that time, Stouffville was a "quaint little village" with two older doctors.

Those were the years when Stouffville's shops were open on Saturday nights and there wasn't a parking space to be had on Main Street. Cars were sparse during the rest of the week, however.

In addition to daytime hours, his office above his father's Main Street hardware store was open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights. Saturday nights were the busiest.

"It was interesting to watch (because) the rural population would come in and do their shopping," June said.

She was on the first Whitchurch-Stouffville council in 1971 and remained a coun-



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Dr. John Button has been a familiar and reassuring presence for thousands of Stouffville residents, delivering more than 100 babies annually for many years. A Stouffville Citizen of the Year in 1983, he has now been honoured with the Stouffville Rotary Club's Distinguished Service award.

cillor for 10 years. Before that, from 1948 to 1968, she was a member of the school board.

Meanwhile, during the first 15 or 20 years of his practice Dr. Button delivered hundreds of babies at the 30-bed Briar Bush Hospital on Stouffville Main Street.

Those were the baby boom years after the Second World War.

The hospital was on the north side of Main Street about halfway between Stouffer Avenue and the 10th Line. It closed in the 1970s.

He also practised obstetrics at the Scarborough General and Uxbridge Cottage hospitals and later at Scarborough Centenary Hospital.

Near the end of his practice, Dr. Button was still delivering about a dozen babies annually.

In 1953, Dr. Button took on Dr. Blair Mitchell as an associate.

In 1957, Dr. Button, along with Dr. Douglas Brodie, built the clinic at 6131 Main St. that is still home to the Stouffville Medical Centre.

"Dr. Button is an excellent doctor," said Dr. Donald Petrie, who joined the medical centre two years after it opened.

"He is very quiet and soft-spoken. I can't speak highly enough about him."

Dr. Button said he has found Stouffville "an ideal place to have my children

grow up."

He and June have three grown children, Jocelyn, Barbara and Janet. And, he says proudly, "I have eight grandchildren."

Dr. Button was born on the same street where he now lives, buying property from the farmer at the end of his street in 1948 to build a house.

He found time in his busy working life to be a member of the Stouffville Lions Club.

He was on the executive for several years and served a year as president.

Dr. Button said he has found Stouffville 'an ideal place to have my children grow up.'

"We met at Harold's Grill then," he recalled. "There was always fundraising going on."

Dr. Button was Parkview Home's first medical director, a post he held from 1963 until retiring about a decade ago.

He was included in the planning stages of the home.

He noted Parkview was very well administered by the Mennonite Society and was always able to attract good kitchen and nursing help.

"Their level of care was always very, very good," he said.



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