

Ex-mayor led fight against dump site

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

A politician who fought a controversial Hwy. 48 landfill site and led Stouffville through its centennial celebrations has died.

Gordon Ratcliff, mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville from 1973 to 1978, died Sunday at Parkview Home.

He was 89.

Mr. Ratcliff, a native of Markham Township, was one of two children born to William and Laura (Lemon) Ratcliff. A brother, Alex, is deceased.

In the early 1920s, his parents bought 180 acres on the west side of Hwy. 48 near Baker Hill. Gordon and his wife, the former Sadie Ward, continued to farm the property until their retirement to a new home on Stouffer Street in 1985.

Mr. Ratcliff entered politics as a councillor in the former Township of Whitchurch.

Mr. Ratcliff and fellow councillor Merlin Baker strongly opposed the operation of a private waste disposal site known as Bremner's dump, on the east side of Hwy. 48, south of Ballantrae.

The dump debate continued following amalgamation of Whitchurch and Stouffville Village in 1971 and drew national attention. The dump closed in the early 1980s.

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With the union of the two municipalities, Mr. Ratcliff maintained his interest in politics, serving three two-year terms as mayor.

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Adding to the impetus of the period was Stouffville's 100th birthday celebration in 1977, that saw the creation of a town centennial plaque, promoted by the historical committee under chairperson Keith Sutherland and the completion of a centennial history compiled by Jean Barkey.

Said Mr. Ratcliff at the time: "I'm proud and privileged to be your mayor for this memorable year and I

Obituary



GORDON RATCLIFF: Mayor also helped bring first credit union to Stouffville.

thank all those who, in the past, have made Stouffville what it is today.

"May this small-town atmosphere of friendship and pride continue during the coming century."

Mr. Ratcliff's involvement with the community included more than politics.

He initiated the opening of the town's first district credit union, served on the board of Stouffville's new high school and the board of the Stouffville Co-operative as well as an appointee to the Stouffville Public Utilities Commission.

He was a member of Markham Baptist Church and spearheaded construction of the present chapel on Church Street.

After moving to Parkview Village seniors complex in 1992, Mr. and Mrs. Ratcliff organized Sunday evening worship services for residents.

They celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at the village in June 1999. Mrs. Ratcliff died in 2003.

A service of celebration was held yesterday at EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church, Stouffville, with Rev. Douglas Gray of Palmerston in charge, assisted by Rev. Tim Soukup.

Surviving is one daughter, Diane, (Mrs. David Stouffer) of Thornhill; one son, Ian (Carolyn), of Stouffville; five grandchildren, Jillian Stouffer; Meghan, (Mrs. Christian Leuprecht) and Andy Stouffer, (Kirsten); Michael and Matthew Ratcliff and two great-grandchildren, Matthias and Anna Leuprecht.

Interment was made at the Stouffville Cemetery.

New residents flock to library's summer program

More youngsters signed up for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library's summer reading program in the first week of July than took part all of last summer.

That's due mainly to new residents who have moved to the community, children's librarian Anne Houle noted.

The Quest for Heroes program encourages children up to age 12 to keep reading during the summer, rewarding them with McDonald's coupons along the way.

The young readers are exploring what it takes to make a hero, which includes everything from superpowers to good character traits.

Youngsters read about sports heroes, everyday heroes and histor-

ical heroes.

Smaller children, age three to six, who aren't yet reading on their own, can have someone read to them.

All participants then visit the library each week to tell a library volunteer what they've read.

Reporting times are posted at the library and the last reports are to be in by Aug. 24.

There is also a program with incentives for teenage readers.

Prizes for the most prolific readers and other participants are presented at the library's Super Saturday on Aug. 26 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Prizes include gift certificates from Toys 'R Us and Canadian Tire, with superhero-related toys, games and other items in the library's display case.

—Hannelore Volpe

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