

'Overwhelming' response to death of former mayor

From page 1.

"If you ended up as his partner, you'd better not mess up," Mitchell said with a laugh.

Mr. King's five granddaughters recited a poem with a message from their granddad in heaven.

Rod King, who works with his brother Jan in farming and in the Stouffville Tim Hortons franchises, said the family has been amazed at the outpouring from the community.

There were long lines and waits of more than an hour at visitations Monday and Tuesday in Markham.

"Overwhelming took on a whole new meaning over the last four days," he told the crowd.

He described his dad as "a straight shooter who did not sit on the fence".

He entered politics when his sons were entering school because "he decided to fix" the school system.

His dad held many titles from champion plowman and holstein owner to those of his political offices, Rod said.

He told a story worthy of a jail break of

Eldred leaving Markham Stouffville Hospital for good earlier this year so he could go home to be with his wife, Beulah. The funeral audience howled with laughter.

Rod praised his mother.

"You were always there (with him), from your 50th wedding anniversary to the opening of a library," he said.

"He steered politicians and staff like he did his tractor."

Mr. King was diagnosed with stomach cancer two years ago.

His successor as York Region chairperson, Bill Fisch, praised Mr. King for mentoring him and leading the region through a major growth spurt — from 300,000 people when he took office in 1984 to 650,000 13 years later.

"He was a celebrated and refined statesman," Mr. Fisch said. "He had an amazing breadth of knowledge."

"He steered politicians and staff like he did his tractor."

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STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Well-known Stouffville singer Susan Ryman performs the solo during the funeral service for Eldred King at Stouffville United Church yesterday. The former mayor died Friday.

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