

Fall fair president, workers saluted for hard work

The banquet host was Rob Miller. His guests were 750 volunteers.

However, the 2011 president of Markham Fair, although accorded two standing ovations, declined to immerse himself in the glory of the occasion. Instead, he turned the accolades around and attributed the event's success to those who, in his own words, "made it all possible".

"You showed your true colours," Mr. Miller told his audience Saturday. "You all should be proud."

Despite four days of squally weather, 51,000 people tramped through the turnstiles, an attendance result that broadened listeners' smiles.

One of these was Stouffville's

Gerri Seeley, a volunteer for 45 years. Her long-service award was presented by granddaughter Shelby Reesor of Mount Albert.

Gerri's link with Markham Fair maintains a family tradition dating back to father Howard Cosburn, president in 1965. A brother, Mac Cosburn, held the position in 1979; her husband, Dennis in 1981; her mother, Mary (Cosburn) Beare in 1986 and son Blair in 2008.

In addition to a multitude of committee positions, Gerri's now working with others on a five-year fair strategic plan.

"We must continually look ahead," she said.

Others honoured included: Doris Thomas, 40 years; Muriel Hoover and Lionel Purcell, 35 years;

Victor Anderson, Mark Hendy, Gail Laughlin, Esther Lewis, Blair Purcell, Holly Purcell, Mark Purcell, Rita Purcell, Marie Seebeck and Linda Smith, 30 years; Ray Brown, Ivan Harris, Susan Hodges, Marilyn Lawson, Brian Lewis, Darren Little, Murray Norton, Linda Patterson, Doug van Wolde and Marie Winkel, 25 years.

Lionel Purcell's fair association dates back to 1931. A daughter, Carrie, was president in 1997. A son Blair held the post in 2007.

Stouffville's Kim Empringham was presented with a special agriculture award, recognizing her work in establishing Markham Fair's first agri-tent.

A model of this achievement was later requested by officials of

Toronto's Royal Winter Fair.

Markham town crier John Webster received a coveted fair service award. Wife Mary, homecraft president on two occasions, is a third generation volunteer.

"A lot has changed in 34 years," she said.

Stouffville's Christine Blizzard, this year's fair ambassador, described the 2011 fair as "amazing".

"Rob (Miller)," she said, "put everyone ahead of himself."

Markham Fair's 2012 president-elect is Phil Redshaw of Stouffville.

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 60 years.



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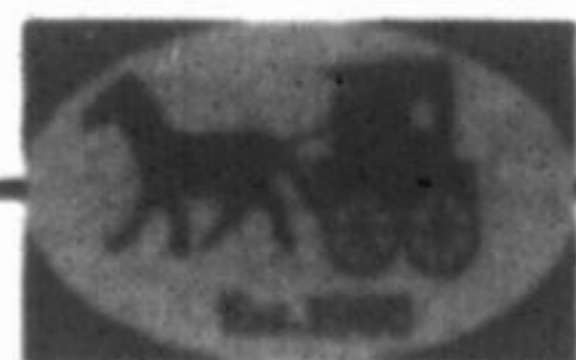
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