

# Retired hockey commentator re-discovers old passion

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For a period spanning 25 years, Brian McFarlane was best known for being on the TV airwaves as a host and commentator on Hockey Night in Canada.

Although the 81-year-old Stouffville resident left the iconic Canadian show in 1990 he's not totally removed from the game.

McFarlane still describes the game of hockey.

Not with his voice though.

Rather, through his hands by painting hockey scenes and selling his works of art.

"I began painting when I was a kid and I gave it up for some 50 years," recalled McFarlane. "And then I started it up again when I moved to Florida."

Taking into consideration his age, along with entering a new frontier of sorts, McFarlane did not know what to expect when he revived his career of putting the brush to the canvas.

The response turned out to be favourable after recently selling 12 of his paintings, which also included some landscape scenes, during a four-weekend viewing of his works at a show near his former residence of Colborne last month.

"I didn't know if I would sell one or none at all," he said.

Recalling he first took to painting at around the age of 10, McFarlane said he wasn't influenced by anyone in particular.

But McFarlane's father, Leslie, who authored the early *Hardy Boys* books, encouraged him to explore his creativity when he was a youngster.

"I wanted to prove to my dad that I could write a book (which he's done, several through the years pertaining to hockey), write a song, (which he did in writing the lyrics to Clear the Track Here Comes Shack) and paint one picture and sell it," he said.

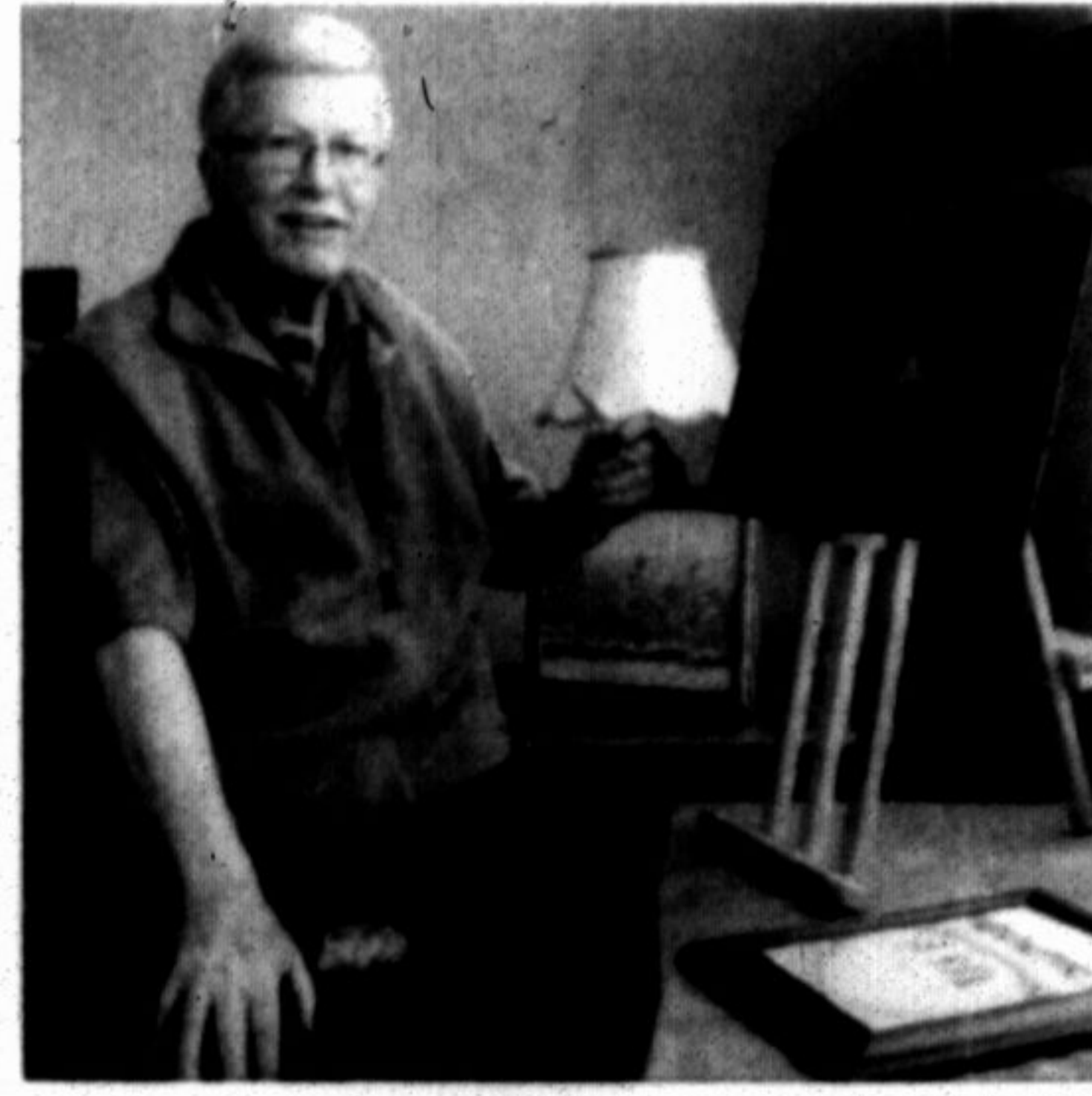
By the time McFarlane was in high school, he took art lessons once a week.

That didn't go over well with his then football coach, McFarlane recalled with a laugh.

"I was on the football team and every Wednesday I was at art lessons. One day, the football coach asked where I was and I said I was taking art lessons. 'For God's sake!' He didn't like that."

Now focusing his attention on painting, McFarlane said he tends to finish one work of art in rather quick fashion.

"I'm usually pretty fast at anything I do," he said.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Former Hockey Night In Canada commentator Brian McFarlane is making a name for himself as an artist.

Since moving to Stouffville, McFarlane said he did not have the time to create any new paintings.

But he intends to create some new works when he returns to his Naples, Fla. winter residence next week before returning to

Stouffville next spring.

In fact, he said, there were two people from Florida who have already made requests for his work.

"My dad always said it's good to look ahead and not look back," he said.

While McFarlane has been busy in forging ahead on his new career, he still follows the National Hockey League as a fan.

With the NHL currently in a labour dispute, McFarlane isn't the least bit happy with what's transpired since the lockout began in mid-September.

What it boils down to, he said, is money.

"It's a case of the millionaires battling billionaires," McFarlane said in describing the latest legal dispute between the players and owners. "In one way, I'm indifferent because I'm not involved in the game anymore."

"But I feel for the fans and especially the peripheral people who depend on hockey for a livelihood, like the restaurant owners for example. It's costing them a lot of money."

"In a way, I think it's foolish and inexplicable they can't find a way to share the money that's at stake. It's sad."

"I really have no idea if the lockout will end. I hope they can at least get half a season in," he said.

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32 Jamesway Cres., Stouffville  
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Advent 1  
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