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COMMUNITY



Steve Somerville/Metroland

Jim Mason (right) and wife Charlene laugh and applaud the jokesters/roasters during a roast/toast of the recently retired Sun-Tribune editor at the Stouffville Legion Hall, Wednesday. Jim is wearing a fashionable hat and holding a custom-made cane for his retirement.

Community gathers to roast Jim Mason

Former Sun-Tribune editor celebrates retirement at Stouffville Legion

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"Well done."

It was the words spoken by dozens at a packed night at the Stouffville Legion on Wednesday, Nov. 9. The community gathered to roast the former Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason in a celebration of his retirement.

But residents weren't speaking of how well they roasted the man - though they did indeed. The comment was a reflection of Mason's life in Stouffville working as the editor of the local paper while playing the role of a committed community volunteer.

The roast was hosted by the Lion's Club of Stouffville, David Barthau of Barthau Jewellers was the master of ceremonies, the Legion provided dinner and the venue; wine was provided by local Willow Springs Winery, audio and video was handled by local Most Excellent Productions and WhiStle Radio recorded the evening.

More than 160 people including; Mayor Justin Altmann, councillors Rick Upton and Hugo Kroon, Regional Municipality of York Chairman and CEO

Wayne Emmerson and former Stouffville mayors Sue Sherban and Fran Sainsbury attended the evening.

Markham-Stouffville MP Jane Philpott though not present, offered her congratulations and remarks via video.

If anything, the number of attendees and their affiliation to the town was a deep expression of just how Mason influenced Stouffville.

Roasters took shots at Mason while reflecting on personal stories and experiences.

"How can we ever roast this guy?" said Mason's longtime friend and former NHL player Keith Acton. "Roasting is about poking fun at someone, revealing some dirt, some skeletons in the closet,"

"Jim doesn't even have a closet!" he exclaimed.

Acton referred to Mason's reputation as he described, a "model citizen".

Mason's daughter, Jennifer, offered her remarks in a speech that sparked echoing laughter.

"Some of you know Jim from his countless community events. He's usually the guy at the front holding the microphone," she said. Jennifer slyly joked that though Mason was involved in several events in town, he was never a participant.

"He was the Terry Fox Run MC for eight years and counting ... but he doesn't

run! Attends church every Sunday ... he never sings along to hymns!"

Other roasters included Altmann, Emmerson, Sainsbury, columnist Jim Thomas, Bruce Stapley of the Stouffville Free Press, Gary Bouwmeister of Bouwmeister Landscaping Ltd, Ron Schell of Schell Lumber and Scott Burrows of Farmer Jack's Gardens.

Patrick Lannigan of the Stouffville Theatre Company alongside singing group the Jingle Bells offered a rendition of The Chordettes' "Mr. Sandman" but as "Mr. Mason".

Mason was born in Fort William, Ont. (Thunder Bay). He received a B.A. from Lakehead University before working at The Source newspaper in his hometown.

In 1981, Mason started work at the Scarborough Mirror before moving on to the Stouffville Sun in 1982. The Sun since then merged with the Tribune and he was editor of the Sun-Tribune for 34 years before retiring September 2016.

He continues to volunteer in the community, most notably with the Stouffville Spirit OJHL team. But Mason's also involved in the annual Terry Fox Run, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Emergency Care Fund, Stouffville Cares refugee sponsorship and more.

As his roasters remarked, "the list goes on ..."