

# Brown put a human face to Peel's school system

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Just before Labor Day every year, Jack Brown would make a sojourn around Peel's public school system.

Even though he was the top administrator at the Board, Brown would make a personal visit to every school, especially to speak to the caretakers. He would compliment them on their work over the summer and be sure to mention any special little project they'd been working on.

It was that kind of special

human touch that made H.J.A. "Jack" Brown such a beloved member of Peel's educational fraternity.

Brown, 77, died last Saturday in Parry Sound of the heart problems which had bothered him since he retired from the Peel Board of Education in 1980, after almost 28 years of service.

For all his business and administrative innovations, Jack Brown will be remembered most for his wonderful character, says John Fraser, another retired education director of the Peel Board. "He knew the name of every caretaker and cleaner in the system," recalls Fraser.

Lou Parsons, Peel Region's first chair, who served on Mississauga council when Brown was with the South Peel Board, says, "Jack Brown was a man way ahead of his time as a business manager. He set the Peel Board on the right course of financial responsibility. And he was every bit as smart as he was nice."

Brown came to Toronto Township in Sept. 1952 as the first administrator of the South Peel system.

In an interview after his retirement, Brown recalled the early days when he and two secretaries were the entire



**BROWN**

board staff. One of Brown's most important jobs was acquiring new school sites for the system. He laughingly recalled how he spent many days in farmer's fields making excep-

tional deals to buy land. "I ate more bloody apples," he laughed.

Later, Brown and Town Manager Dean Henderson worked out an arrangement with local developers to buy school lands at a fixed price, which would escalate slowly over time. The deal was credited with saving local taxpayers millions of dollars in land acquisition costs.

Because of his exemplary service in education, the Peel Board of Education named its administrative building after Brown, calling it the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre.

During the Second World War, Brown served 4 1/2 years in the military, three of them as chief radar officer for the desert air force in Africa.

Brown is survived by his wife Doris, a former Peel principal, and by children Susan, Ian and Gregg, step-children Lynn and Leslie and eight grandchildren. Donations may be made to the H.J.A. Brown Education Scholarship.