

Political strategist Clewes was first chairman of CVH

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Whether he was guiding construction of a new hospital, advising on a political campaign, or raising money for charity, Dick Clewes was a master of strategy and promotion.

Clewes, 72, died suddenly Monday of a massive stroke. He had collapsed earlier in the day after blacking out while shopping. He and his wife Sylvia were to have left last night for a five-week vacation in southern France.

News of his sudden death shocked his many friends, including former Mississauga South MP Don Blenkarn. "I've lost a real buddy," Blenkarn said yesterday of Clewes, with whom he lunched every week.

The two men met while working together on Sinclair Stevens' leadership campaign for the Conservative Party in 1976. They quickly struck up a close friendship which has endured ever since.

Clewes worked on all of Blenkarn's election campaigns. "He was a real good backroom guy," said Blenkarn of Clewes, with whom he was also involved in several business ventures. "He was great at strategy and advertising and slogans. He just had a knack for it."



Dick Clewes helped make the Credit Valley Hospital a reality as chairman of its first board.

The native of London, Ont. was with McKim Advertising in Montreal and Toronto for 26 years, the last four as president, ending in 1979.

He later headed Forestville Clock Co. and then founded his own computer consulting firm. "He basically taught himself everything about computers," says Blenkarn.

The launch of Credit Valley Hospital would not have been nearly as successful without the skills its founding chairman brought to the table, says former hospital President Dean Sane.

Clewes was named chairman of the

first provisional hospital board in 1979, was elected chair when the board came into full effect a year later and served until the building opened in 1985. "As chairman, he was extremely astute and brilliant," recalls Sane. "He had great insight into the political strategy that was required to get things going. He was one of those very unusual strategic thinkers."

The business graduate of the University of Western Ontario negotiated the purchase of the property from Cadillac-Fairview and Peel Region; convinced Health Minister Dennis Timbrell of the need for the project; and got subsequent Minister Larry Grossman to award the contract to Mississauga's PCL Construction.

Those developments were crucial in launching the hospital. "He was also a prime mover in selecting the best medical leaders. He will be sadly missed by all his friends at Credit Valley," says Sane.

In 1985, Clewes finally tried his hand at politics as a candidate. He ran unsuccessfully for the Conservative Provincial nomination in Mississauga South won by Margaret Marland.

Clewes is survived by his wife Sylvia, who worked in Blenkarn's constituency office for most of his political career. He is also survived by their daughter Karyn and by his four children from a previous marriage, Richard, Peter, Brian and Janet.

Visitation will be from 2-4 p.m. tomorrow at the Turner and Porter Peel Chapel on Hurontario St. The funeral is tentatively set for Friday at 11 a.m. at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Erindale, where the family are long-time members.