

# Dowling rides the bus into transit Hall of Fame

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Ed Dowling's lifelong association with public transit is culminating in the ultimate honour that

can be bestowed in the industry — induction into the Canadian Urban Transit Association's Hall of Fame.

Dowling, who oversaw the development of Mississauga's transit system for nearly three decades, is one

of three people who received the W.G. Ross Lifetime Achievement Award at CUTA's national convention in Quebec City on Wednesday.

"It's a tremendous honour," says Dowling, 73. "I never expected it. It's just fantastic and it's something I will treasure for the rest of my life."

Dowling's father Frank was the first mayor of the Town of Streetsville. He ran Streetsville Coach Lines and young Ed grew up in the business.

He joined Charterways in the  
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## Former transit boss helped build system from ground up

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school bus division at age 21 and was managing Charterways in September 1969 when it landed the contract to start running the Town of Mississauga's transit system.

When Martin Dobkin ran for mayor of Mississauga and won in 1973, part of his platform was to see Mississauga Transit become part of the TTC. But, after Dowling met with the new mayor — Hazel McCallion — "it was determined that it was more appropriate for us to build our own transit system," he says.

He became the first manager of the City-run transit system, a position he held until he retired in 1998.

When Dowling began overseeing Mississauga's transit system it consisted of six

buses, three routes and 10 employees. When he retired, there were 310 buses, 60 routes and more than 750 employees.

Dowling's tenure was marked by innovation and a long series of firsts for the city, including the first articulated bus in Canada in 1979. Mississauga was first to sell weekly bus passes and provide air conditioning in the vehicles.

"We also had the first electronic destination signs in Ontario on our buses," says Dowling.

"I'm also really proud of the fact that we had a pretty good union-management relationship," says Dowling, now a consultant who has never stopped working in the industry. The New York-based company he works for now promotes "smart bus technology" including automatic bus stop announcements

on Canadian transit systems.

A former president of the CUTA himself, Dowling was nominated for the W.G. Ross Lifetime Achievement Award by Ken Mawdsley, head of B.C. Transit and by former Mississauga City Manager Doug Lychak

and former Mississauga Transit Director Bill Cunningham.

Meanwhile, a passion for public transit seems to run in the Dowling family's genes.

All three of Dowling's son are employed in the industry.



Ed Dowling, who ran Mississauga's transit system from the time it was established in 1969 until he retired in 1998, was honoured Wednesday with a lifetime achievement award from the Canadian Urban Transit Association. Here, Dowling is pictured with Mayor Hazel McCallion.

*The Mississauga News file photo*