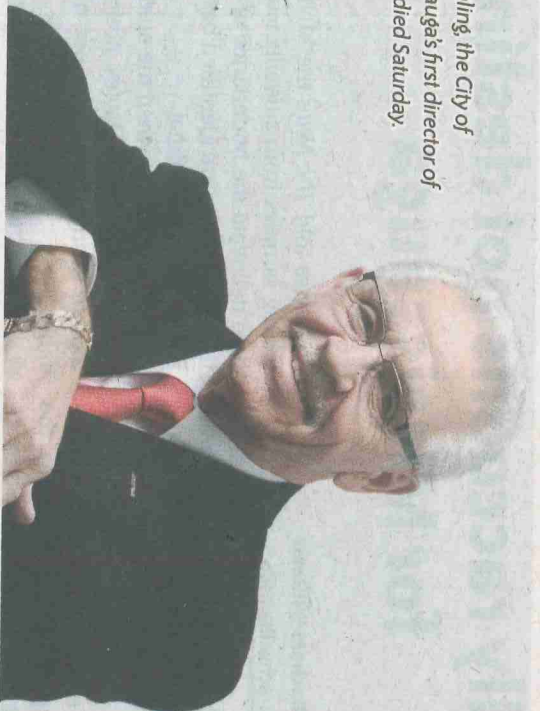


NEWS

Ed Dowling, the City of Mississauga's first director of transit, died Saturday.



Ed Dowling was a transit 'visionary' and innovator

By Chris Clay
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Ed Dowling, a Mississauga transit pioneer and the municipality's first director of transit, died Saturday morning of cancer.

He was 76.

Bill Cunningham, who succeeded Dowling as the municipality's transit director after Dowling retired in 1998, regarded his former boss as not only a colleague but also a friend. He noted that Dowling brought in a number of innovations that are staples of the transit system today.

For example, Dowling was responsible for establishing an automated telephone number people could call for information on the bus schedules.

He was also a champion of transit being a true alternative to the private vehicle and, to help reach that goal, made Mississauga the first municipality in the country to offer air-conditioned buses.

Dowling also introduced Canada's first articulated buses, made sure Mississauga was the first municipality to sell weekly bus passes, made Mississauga the first transit service in Ontario to use electronic destination signs on the buses and established a satellite transit facility in Malton.

"Ed was very much a visionary," said Cunningham. "He saw the future of transit in Mississauga and through innovation, creativity and foresight, he was an architect of the system's growth from its earliest days."

A few years back, Dowling received the W.G. Ross Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Urban Transit Association.

He was responsible for unprecedented growth in Mississauga's transit system. When he started, Mississauga Transit consisted of six buses, three routes and 10 employees.

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

"Ed will be remembered for building a strong foundation and leading Mississauga Transit through its transformation into becoming a world-class transit system," said Mayor Bonnie Crombie in a statement. "Under Ed's leadership and vision, Mississauga Transit - now called MiWay - grew from 4.1 million rides in 1974 to 23.3 million rides in 1997."

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

He joined Charterways in the 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.

In October, MiWay's transit operations building on Central Parkway West was renamed the E.J. (Ed) Dowling Transit Facility in his honour.

Dowling was also a talented athlete, winning the Minto Cup and the junior national lacrosse championship with the 1959 Brampton Excelsiors. He was also president of the Mississauga Tomahawks team that won the Founder's Cup title in 1986.

Dowling is survived by his wife, Dee, sons Kevin, Jeff and Ted, and his seven grandchildren.

A visitation will be held today from 1 to 3 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. at Glen Oaks Funeral Home and Cemetery.

The funeral is tomorrow at 11 a.m. at Streetsville United Church.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to Streetsville United Church or the Carlo Fidani Regional Cancer Centre at Credit Valley Hospital.

~ with files from John Stewart