

Ron Duquette

He's a man with many 'hats'

When Ron Duquette came to live and work in Mississauga five years ago, he was barely aware that the place existed.

Like most Toronto residents, he was kind of shocked to find that Metro Toronto isn't flat.

Now, half a decade later, Duquette has already turned down an excellent offer to purchase a house in Oakville because, "I wouldn't live anywhere else but Mississauga. It just wouldn't feel right."

Duquette is that guy who keeps turning up in front of council on all of those Cable 10 television broadcasts. You have to pay attention to each appearance, however, because he's undoubtedly wearing a different hat.

"People tend to think of a public relations man as a flim-flam man," notes the 34-year-old, who was born in the Gaspé Peninsula. "I don't call myself a public relations man. I prefer to say I'm a communications specialist."

No Shortage

Whatever you call it, there's no shortage of demand for the services of Duquette, who has begun Mississauga's first full-service public relations agency, Ad-Venture Communications Inc. Perhaps the greatest reason for the success of the new company to date is Duquette's enormous contact with the community.

He helped form the Mississauga Board of Trade, whose Dollar Days campaign he recently promoted. He does all of Square One Shopping Centre's print advertising, largely because of his previous employment as developer Bruce McLaughlin's public relations man.

Since starting his company, which works closely with the firm Graphics West, Duquette has landed several major accounts, including the advertising for Hawaiian Tropic suntan lotion and the contract to publish Wardair's in-flight magazine. Duquette not only sells the advertising for that magazine, but takes pictures and has written travel and sports stories.

Ad-Venture is doing a great deal of work with the Region of Peel.

Other Activities

As if his business isn't enough, Duquette organizes the annual Mississauga Sports

Celebrities Dinner, is a very active member of the Junior Lacrosse Association, is a director of the board of trade, is secretary of the Mississauga South Provincial Progressive Conservative Association and is the proud co-chairman of the Mississauga Sports Complex Foundation.

"The Sports Complex is number one outside my family and business," says Duquette, who has often driven to Peterborough or Brantford to see lacrosse games. "Politics is number two and then I try to find time for the lacrosse and the other community projects."

Duquette is taking a more active interest in his ratepayers' association as well. He lives in Lorne Park Estates with his wife Helen, daughter Renier 10, son Michael 4 and a cat and a dog.

Although he sees his public relations firm expanding dramatically as Mississauga grows, "I don't want this to become the McLaren Advertising of Mississauga," says Duquette.

He had a difficult adjustment after working for McLaughlin, "a great motivator," then becoming responsible for making the final decisions himself.

"Zonks Me Out"

His wife Helen, a dedicated yoga student and teacher and a vegetarian, helped solve her husband's pressure-induced insomnia by "putting something in my tea which really zonks me out."

Duquette, like McLaughlin, is a dedicated free-enterpriser who feels Mississauga is just beginning to understand its own tremendous potential. That's one of the reasons he can't understand why it always seems to be the same group of people who volunteer for community projects. "The few people who are really involved get tired of doing all the work," he says.

But that doesn't mean they're going to stop volunteering. So don't be surprised to turn on Cable 10 soon and see Ron Duquette getting ready to make another professional pitch on behalf of the community. Some people never seem to get tired of sporting new hats.