

Business

City's leading Canadian Tire dealer opts for retirement

By JAN DEAN
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MN March 6, 2013

What were the odds that the first white child born in God's Lake,

Manitoba, would become one of Mississauga's premier retailers?

Certainly, Mike Elik didn't anticipate that turn of fate.

In Mississauga he is known as

the leading Canadian Tire dealer/operator in the city, first at the Burnhamthorpe and Mavis store, and until January of this year, as the owner of the Heartland outlet.

He opened that 80,000-sq.-ft. store in 2000.

Elik had hoped to get his 40-year-pip from CanTire, but after 39 years and some health issues, he retired at age 78 in mid-January.



Mike Elik

When he owned the Burnhamthorpe and Mavis store he first met Mayor Hazel McCallion who shopped there. The two became good friends. McCallion eventually hired Elik's daughter Kristy to run *The Booster* — the Streetsville-based community paper her husband Sam McCallion founded.

"Mike was a great community supporter," said McCallion. "He was always there to help."

Elik hadn't planned a retail career. He played hockey through university but when he realized he wouldn't

make it to the NHL, he got an engineering degree. He worked as an engineer, then ran a hockey school — the first in Canada to feature NHL instructors.

When the school went under in 1974, he was 40.

"I was basically unemployable," he said. "I considered buying a McDonald's franchise but that was

a lot of money, and to open a Tim Hortons I'd have had to learn to cook.

"I joined CanTire because all they wanted from me was a commitment."

For the future, Elik says he and partner, Nancy Hall, plan on enjoying his retirement.

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