

A big night for Iggy Kaneff

By SID RODAWAY

It was one of those rare times when Iggy Kaneff was caught speechless.

What started out as a small dinner get-together with his lawyer Mike Wier and the MPP for Mississauga East, Bud Gregory, turned into a \$150-a-plate surprise stag party called to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Kaneff's arrival in Canada from his native Bulgaria.

There he stood, the man who arrived here with \$5 in his pocket a shovel in his hands and a dream in 1951, now surrounded by the construction industry's big shots and shaking hands with Ontario Premier William Davis.

Mississauga's most colorful developer has carved out a small empire for himself, mainly in Mississauga, where his tall white apartment buildings dot the landscape.

The dinner was attended by about 110 invited guests whose \$150 contribution will go toward creating an Ignat Kaneff Scholarship for deserving students of urban planning and design at the University of Toronto's Erindale College. Two students will receive \$1,000 each year.

Gordon S. Shipp, founder of Shipp Construction and one of Mississauga's first major developers, told the crowd how Kaneff had first come to work for him as a laborer 25 years ago, graduating to carpenter the next spring.

A CBC film short on Kaneff was shown, detailing the construction of a small frame bungalow in Lakeview as his first project and his first eight-suite walk-up apartment building on Paisley Blvd. E. in Cooksville.

Davis told the audience that most immigrants to Canada come to Ontario, the "land of opportunity." He added that Kaneff's lifestyle proved that "if you want to work hard enough, you can achieve almost anything."

He joked that as a result of the dinner, Erindale College would see a significant reduction in its government grants this year.

Davis noted that immigrants often show a particular appreciation for higher education because "those born here sometimes take these things for granted."

Mississauga MP Tony Abbott read the crowd a letter of congratulations from Prime Minister Trudeau. He stated in the letter that he took "pride in the fact that Canada can provide opportunity to people like Kaneff."

In reference to Kaneff's work in residential construction, Trudeau said, "You have served your adopted country well."

As befitting his personality, the gathering of Kaneff's friends was predictably boisterous. One man repeatedly demanded, "Where's the letter from the doctor." Mississauga's mayor,

Dr. Martin Dobkin, and the entire city council was absent from the invitation-only affair.

That situation stood in marked contrast to Kaneff's close friendship with both former Mayor Robert Speck and former Police Chief Garnett McGill. A slide show of Kaneff's life in Canada featured a snapshot of Kaneff relaxing in the Florida sun with Speck and McGill.

McGill was one of Kaneff's favorite golfing partners and his recent death added the one somber note to the celebration. Scheduled to be

one of the head-table guests and speakers, his name was deliberately left on the program and a moment of silence held in his memory.

Dr. Edward Robinson, principal of Erindale College, told the gathering that the new scholarship would be awarded yearly to third- and fourth-year students of Canadian Urban Studies at his school. The first two will be given out on June 15 of this year at Erindale's convocation.

He said that it represented the first scholarship of its kind and noted that in this, the University of Toronto's 150th

anniversary year, private funds were extremely important to insure continued top status among Canadian and worldwide universities. This is also the 10th anniversary of the founding of Erindale College.

Described as "flamboyant but humble" by former parliamentary candidate Ted Glista, Kaneff had little to say.

"I could cry tonight," he said. He promised that he would make sure that the scholarship would continue forever.



Photo by SID RODAWAY

It was Iggy Kaneff Night at Mississauga Golf and Country Club on Friday. Premier Bill Davis, Kaneff and the prin-

icipal of Erindale College, Dr. Edmund Robinson, discuss Kaneff scholarship for students of urban affairs.