

HAPPY 100TH - WE'RE RENAMING A WATER PLANT FOR YOU

A NON-POLITICAL KENNEDY FINALLY GETS HIS DUE, SAYS JOHN STEWART



JOHN STEWART
Column

When Art Kennedy was a teen growing up with 8 siblings on a Toronto Township farm in the 30s - selling milk to neighbours for 10 cents a quart - the summers were long and hot.

So he provided relief. He mounted a 45-gallon barrel on stilts. "It was beside a well, a bit away from the house," he recalls.

"I rigged it up so you could open a tap on the barrel and have a shower," he says at Port Credit Residences where he recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

It was a highly successful water engineering pro-

ject, not the last of his career.

The only child to earn a senior (5-year) matriculation from Port Credit High, Kennedy couldn't find employment, so his intrepid mother Evelyn (left alone to raise her family after husband Jack, the clerk-treasurer of the township, died suddenly at 46) took matters into her hands.

She and Arthur visited a dean she knew at U of T, who told them about a Leonard Foundation Scholarship that could pay his \$250 annual tuition.

A few days after writing exams to become a mechanical engineer in 1943, Kennedy joined the RCAF.

Upon his return, he was hired by the municipality, whose sole engineer, Bill Maxwell was close to retire-



John Stewart photo

Art Kennedy, who turned 100 in March, reviews the binder his family gave him to preserve the day's memories. The long-time manager of the water system for Toronto Township, the Town of Mississauga and Peel Region will have the Lakeview water plant renamed in his honour.

ment. "They really needed civil, not mechanical engineers" so Kennedy shifted over to waterworks, where he managed the Public Utilities Commission from 1955 until Peel Region was formed 45 years ago.

Kennedy led what today would be called the trans-

formational evolution of Peel's water system. He closes his eyes in concentration as he painstakingly delineates, street-by-street, pumping station-by-pumping station, the route that took water from Lakeview to Malton's aircraft plants.

The OMB denied Mal-

ton's bid for independence, instead ordering the township, which opposed the application, to build a 13-mile water pipe.

When Kennedy saw Toronto industries building giant water tanks to provide their own backup supply he thought, "that's a reflection of the municipality not paying enough attention to service they were rendering."

While his mother and siblings starred on CBC radio's *The Kennedy Kids*, Art avoided the family's bright political spotlight.

His father was a councillor, his uncle Tom 36-year MPP and Ontario Premier, his brother Doug 17-year Mississauga South MPP and brother Hal 26-year Ward 1 councillor.

When he thinks of his uncle, he remembers \$1 bills hanging on his Christmas tree and the store at Dundas Street East and what's now Tomken Rd. (for Tom Ken-

nedy) where the family's farms were.

Kennedy's the unofficial family historian and archivist. He's documented Port Credit's cenotaph, his father and uncle's lives, researched the Dixie grave-stones where his forebears lie and personally restored neglected headstones.

He also wrote a history of the American Water Works Association, on which he served.

In perhaps the most fitting of all family honours, the architect of Peel's water system will soon see the Lakeview plant he nurtured to maturity renamed the Arthur P. Kennedy Water Treatment Park.

If it's a long, hot day of celebration, he could always rig a shower stall for relief from the political speeches.

John Stewart is a retired longtime journalist with the Mississauga News. His column, My Back Pages, appears each week.