

30 years in politics

Queen's Park veteran calling it quits

By JOHN STEWART
Staff Reporter

That rumor you've been hearing for the past few elections about Doug Kennedy retiring — well, it's finally true.

After 18 years as an MPP and 30 years in public office, Kennedy has decided to call it quits. He will not seek re-election as the representative for Mississauga South in the upcoming provincial election.

Kennedy made the decision last week just before he announced his plans. It took a number of people by surprise, including the prospective candidates to replace him.

"It was the most difficult decision of my later life," Kennedy said afterward. He said he came to the conclusion he should retire because of his age, 68, and his long involvement with the time-consuming demands of public life. He said his wife Kathleen is very happy with his decision.

In response to rumors that he had been pressured to retire, Kennedy said, "It was totally my own decision."

The toughest election Kennedy ever faced, he said, was not for the provincial legislature, but for the Mississauga Hydro Commission when he was one of seven candidates with only two to be elected. Kennedy never fought a really difficult provincial election and frequently won with ease.

His low-key style, and almost retiring personality seemed to be a political liability in this age of television politics, but Kennedy knew everyone in the riding and worked hard to resolve any constituent problems brought to his attention.

The Kennedy name has been an institution in the southern part of Mississauga. Thomas

L. Kennedy, Doug's uncle, was first elected in 1919 and served for 40 years except for a three-year period, 1934-37, following the Hepburn sweep.

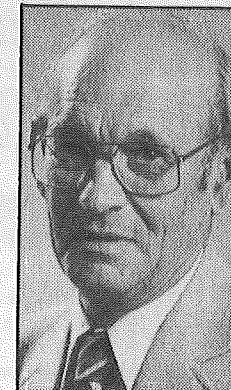
Looking back over his Queen's Park career where he served as government whip and parliamentary secretary to several ministries, Kennedy said if he picked one highlight it would be his involvement in getting seat-belt legislation passed. Kennedy introduced a private member's bill on the issue and lobbied hard for it for several years until the government introduced legislation making seat belts mandatory.

The former chairman of the Peel public school board, who served as a trustee for eight years, said he was also pleased with his

part in the enactment of environmental legislation and the hiring of an ombudsman at Queen's Park.

Kennedy says he will now be more actively involved in his business interests and will enjoy spending a lot more time with his wife. "I think I'll try to reduce my golf handicap a bit, too, which shouldn't be too difficult," says the veteran politician.

Perhaps the greatest respects to Kennedy have already been paid in the past by his political opponents who may have disagreed with his party's position, but always were careful to point out during election campaigns that they had the utmost respect for the man they always described as sincere and decent.



DOUG KENNEDY

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KENNEDY, Doug