

Former Ward 1 councillor dead at 83

Real Biography

KENNEDY, Harold

# Kennedy was 'grassroots'

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By JOHN STEWART  
Staff

Harold Kennedy may have spent 26 years as a Toronto Township and Mississauga councillor, but he was, "the least political person" ever, says his successor in the job.

"He was the consummate grassroots politician. That's what he was all about," says City of Mississauga councillor Carmen Corbasson, who worked as Kennedy's council secretary for a decade and then succeeded him in representing Ward 1.

Kennedy was from a long line of politicians. When he retired in 1994,

he or a member of his family had served on local school boards, hydro commissions or councils for a period of 91 consecutive years.

Kennedy died of heart failure Saturday. He was 83.

Corbasson says stories about Kennedy's efforts to go out of his way for his constituents are legion. He wasn't known for making speeches, but for keeping his ear close to the ground and delivering what his constituents wanted.

"He always looked after the underdog," says Corbasson, adding Kennedy was always more of a friend than a boss.

"He would say to me, 'I know I have an appointment, but there's a lady with a windrow in her driveway and she has a supply of oxygen being delivered and I have to go down to her house and shovel.'"

Kennedy never looked for accolades and was never comfortable in the spotlight that came with the political arena.


"He was a gentleman and a gentleman," says Mayor Hazel McCallion. "He took a personal interest in his residents. It was not unusual for him to leave City Hall and go give a senior citizen a lift somewhere if they didn't have a car."

She particularly remembered her and Kennedy meeting personally with dozens of residents of Lakeview  
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Harold Kennedy

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## Kennedy proud of accomplishments

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when Lakefront Promenade Park was being developed.

"He was the driving force behind that," says McCallion. "He was determined that park (which took about 20 years to be developed) would go ahead, and it did."

Kennedy first ran for office in 1967. He was going to replace the local school trustee, but then local councillor Len McNeese decided to run for deputy-reeve and Kennedy won the empty Council position.

When he retired, in 1994, Kennedy said he was proud of winning 10 consecutive elections, but was even more proud that each of his opponents ended up becoming his friend.

"The way I work with the people — being close to them — I guess that is hereditary," he said in an interview with *The News* at the time. "My dad (who served as both councillor and then clerk of Toronto Township from 1907-31) and my uncle (T.L. Kennedy, an MPP for 36 years and briefly Ontario's Premier) weren't flashy people and they weren't particularly interested in climbing the political ladder."

A longtime member of the Boy Scout movement, the former laboratory tech-

nician at the Petro-Canada refinery in Clarkson also worked tirelessly for St. John Ambulance. Kennedy was a founder and charter member of the Mississauga Traffic Safety Council and initiated the local school patrol program.

Visitation for Kennedy will be held from noon-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. today at Skinner and Middlebrook (128 Lakeshore Rd. E., Port Credit).

The funeral will be held at Trinity Anglican Church (26 Stavebank Rd.) tomorrow at 11 a.m.

Eulogies will be offered by his brother, Don, his eldest daughter, Helen, and his granddaughter, Jessica.

Donations, in lieu of flowers, may be made to St. John Ambulance, Mississauga division or the Trinity Anglican Church Endowment Fund.