

Community builder rewarded

By JAN DEAN

Staff
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If you read John Grisham's thrillers you probably think all lawyers are driven, greedy, sleazy characters.

Mississauga's John Keyser hardly fits that stereotype. He's a lawyer, but he's also a devoted family man and one of Mississauga's foremost community builders.

Keyser received a Lifetime Business Achievement Award from the Mississauga Board of Trade last Thursday night at the MBOT Chair's Gala. More than 300 people attended the event at the International Centre.

Keyser said it's "unbelievable" that he would receive such an award but it's hard to think of anyone who deserves the award more.

Now in his 50th year of practicing law, Keyser stated his career on Bay St. in Toronto. After 17 years, in 1979, he moved out to Mississauga to found a new law firm with four partners.

He still hangs out his shingle at Keyser Mason Ball. The firm employs 20 barristers who specialize in business law. Keyser specializes in

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municipal and corporate commercial law.

"When I came from Toronto, the warmth with which I was received here in Mississauga was second to none," said Keyser. "Mississauga is irresistible."

He spent more than 25 years sitting on the Committee of Adjustment, starting at a time when Mississauga's population was just 150,000.

"After more than 25 years with the Committee of Adjustment," said MBOT President and CEO Sheldon Leiba said "(Keyser's) thumbprint is all over this city, especially the City Centre."

John
Keyser

Keyser remembers the fun of building up MBOT in the early days with friends and colleagues including developer Harold Shipp and Ron Lenyk, the former publisher of *The Mississauga News*.

Keyser served on the MBOT board and is a past-president. Leiba credits his hard work in the 1980s with making MBOT the vibrant organization it is today.

Keyser also served on boards of organizations including Community Living Mississauga, the Greater Toronto YMCA and the Living Arts Centre.

However, "family always came first," he said proudly.

He and artist wife Patricia will celebrate their 49th anniversary later this month.

Meanwhile, Keyser has no plans to retire, though he would like to take a little more time off in the future.

There was a down-home feel to last Thursday's gala, but the down-home in question was Halifax. That was the original home and stomping ground of outgoing MBOT chair Ian MacFadden. His day job is vice-president of financing and consulting (GTA West) for the Business Development Bank of Canada.

There was an East Coast theme to this year's gala.

"Staff (MBOT) asked me to pick a theme and then they did all the work," MacFadden said with a laugh. He said he's met a lot of great people in Mississauga and MBOT is "a great organization, and one I'm proud to be part of."

Maritime comedian Jimmy Flynn was master of ceremonies at the event. He introduced incoming 2012 MBOT chair Grant Clark, a long-time MBOT member and supporter who is president of Solutions for HR Inc., the Mississauga-based human resource management consulting firm he founded in 1995.

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