

'Super-volunteer' was a devoted Lion

By JOHN STEWART
Staff

Mississauga super-volunteer Lewis Lawrence spearheaded the Central Lions Club's efforts to establish what is now a thriving farmers' market at Square One Shopping Centre.

The retired professional engineer, named Mississauga's Citizen of the Year in 1995, died June 3 at Trillium Health Centre. He was 87.

Lawrence volunteered with the Lions Club for a total of 56 years, first in his native India and then in Canada.

He ran a refinery in suburban Bombay (now Mumbai) before moving to Mississauga in 1981.

"He is truly going to be missed by his family and the community," said Lawrence's son, Michael. "He was always reaching out to those who needed help."

His greatest achievement may have been the establishment of the farmers' market, which set the template for generating revenue to support a variety of other service club programs, said his son.

"He basically profiled it," Michael said.

Lawrence worked closely with the McLaughlin family, who owned Square One at the time, to establish the concept and took care of all of the logistics personally in the early days. "He was almost like a thorn in their side to get things done," laughed his son. "He never gave up."

Michael Lawrence said he would frequently drive his father to Mississauga Hospital (now Trillium Health Centre) to sell raffle tickets.

"Regardless of the profile of the event, whether there were dignitaries involved or whether it was a bingo or the farmers' market, he was



Lewis Lawrence, past president, past regional chair and one of the original driving forces of the Mississauga Central Lions Club, meets Lois Higgins and Murphy of St. John's Ambulance's Therapy Dogs program. It is one of the many volunteer organizations benefiting from annual donations from the Lions.

always there," he said.

Lawrence served two terms as president of the Mississauga Central Lions Club, where he was a sparkplug for many fundraising efforts the past three decades.

He was selected as the Rotary Club's Senior of the Year in 1991 and at different times served on the police liaison committees for both 11 and 12 divisions in Mississauga.

He was also a board member of the Older

Adult Centre at Square One.

Mayor Hazel McCallion called Lawrence's death "a great loss" for Mississauga. She wants to hear from members of the Older Adult Centre for ways in which the City of Mississauga can honour Lawrence for his "outstanding contributions."

The Lions Club held a tribute dinner for Lawrence in 2008 to recognize how the funds raised primarily through the farmers' market had benefited innumerable other local causes, such as the annual Mississauga Sports Dinner and Gymnastics Mississauga.

He's the recipient of a City volunteer award and received the Ontario Volunteer Award in 1998 in recognition of a decade of service.

In 2004 he received the Judge Brian Stevenson Fellowship Award for "outstanding achievement and contribution to Lionism."

The Lions Club intends to hold a special memorial service in honour of Lawrence.

The Square One Older Adult Centre has established an endowment fund in Lawrence's name.

Donations can be made through the Community Foundation of Mississauga, by calling 905-897-8880.

Lawrence is survived by his wife of 62 years, Sophie, his four sons, Francis, Christopher, Robert and Michael, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Visitation is Sunday and Monday, 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. at the Peel Chapel of Turner & Porter (2180 Hurontario St.).

A funeral mass will be held at St. Christopher's Church on Tuesday at 11 a.m.

Donations can be made to Trillium Health Centre.

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