

# Bruce McLaughlin: The man who built Square One

By JOHN STEWART  
Staff

## Obituary

It's not surprising that Bruce McLaughlin — who most often was described as a visionary by those who knew him and worked for him — had an office on the top floor in the northeast corner of his office building at 77 City Centre Dr.

From there, McLaughlin had a close-up view of the Square One Shopping Centre he built and opened in 1973 and a long-range view of the empty fields beyond, which he had ambitious plans to develop.

McLaughlin, founder of S.B. McLaughlin Associates, which later became Mascan Corporation, died Monday morning surrounded by his family. He was 86.

The longtime Mississauga resident lived for many years in a Spanish-style mansion beside the Mississauga Golf and Country Club.

McLaughlin's greatest legacy will be "the vision he had that helped create the development of the city of Mississauga," says Doug Fowles, who worked for the developer for a dozen years. "It will be the vision he had for a downtown core in Mississauga, wrapped around Square One."

Ron Duquette, another longtime McLaughlin employee, says the developer's long-range thinking and planning "were way ahead of everybody else. He was thinking years down the road. He had the foresight to see that there would be major

growth west of Toronto, mainly because of the airport."

McLaughlin was already planning a major development on his huge

holdings near Burnhamthorpe Rd. and Hurontario St. when a fire at the municipal offices at Confederation Square in Cooksville in 1969 provided an opportunity to cement his lands as the future downtown core.

"The day after the fire, he pre-

sented plans for a new city hall — free of charge on 10 acres of land at Square One," recalls Duquette. "He 'engineered' the location if you will. It was a shrewd move and he was a shrewd businessman."

The future city core would unravel around his holdings. McLaughlin had made himself the major player in development of the core.

When a reform council was elected in 1973 and councillors, including Hazel McCallion, wanted to move their offices to a new location, McLaughlin fought back strongly, making several personal deputations to council.

He was a quiet man in private, but a lion in public life, says Duquette.

He wrote two books, *40 Million Places to Stand* and *100 Million Canadians*, that expressed his philosophy that "all nations should implement a total planning system immediately."

Fowles notes that Square One was built totally with underground servicing, unheard of at the time. That was done so that highrise office and apartment buildings could eventually be built on the parking lots that surround the mall, a plan that's still in place today.

McLaughlin was also the architect of the Mississauga Valley community, south of Burnhamthorpe Rd. and north of Dundas St. W. between Hurontario St. and Cawthra Rd. At the time of approval, it was the largest plan of subdivision ever approved

in Ontario.

Although he never sought credit for it, McLaughlin was involved in numerous community causes, says Duquette.

He insisted on saving the historic Cherry Hill house, home of one of the city's founding families, at his company's cost because it was directly in the path of the extension of Cawthra Rd.

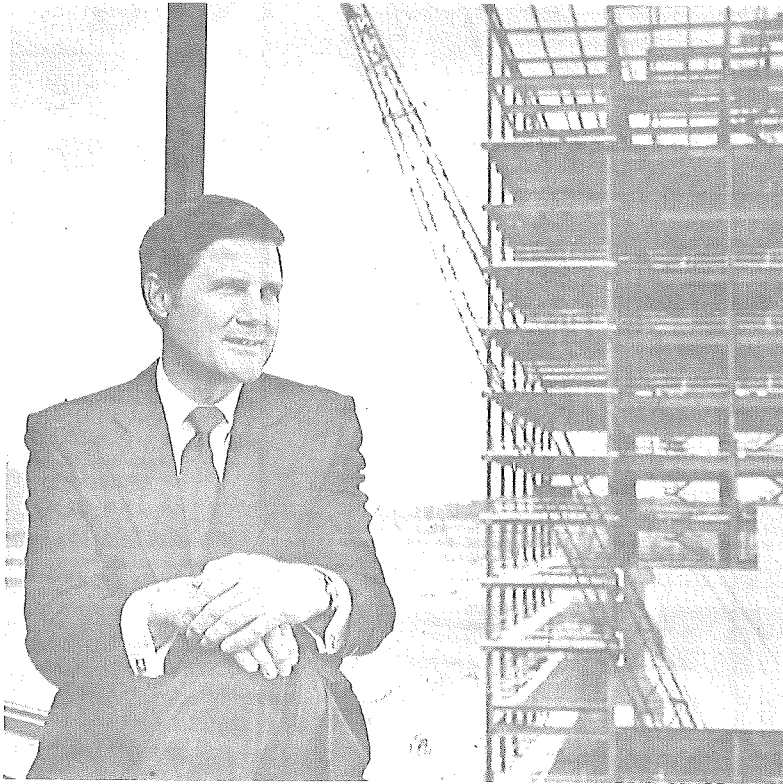
The Board of Trade and the Mississauga Symphony "were started in his board room," Duquette says. McLaughlin Associates financed the Board of Trade for its first several years.

McLaughlin was the highest-paid business executive in Canada by 1980, earning \$2.4 million a year. His business empire grew to include numerous golf courses, ski resorts (including Grouse Mountain in B.C.) and condominium developments in Canada and the U.S.

Duquette says McLaughlin was "tough. He knew what he wanted and he knew how to get there. He had a great way of convincing people and that's what made him the great leader he was."

An avid outdoorsman, McLaughlin served as head of the Canadian equestrian three-day event team at the Olympics, Pan Am Games and world championships.

A private family service will be held today. Donations may be made to the Bruce McLaughlin Cardiac Fund at Trillium Health Centre.



Bruce McLaughlin died Monday morning. McLaughlin was best known as the man who built Square One Shopping Centre.