



Staff photo by Fred Loek

The Mississauga Rotary Club recently presented Laurie Pallett with a Paul Harris Fellowship Award to recognize her many years of volunteer service to the arts community.

She's a Paul Harris Award winner

Rotarians honor Laurie Pallett

By ANGELA BLACKBURN
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Laurie Pallett is a one-woman show, but her act plays out mostly behind-the-scenes.

One of the Mississauga arts community's most prominent names, Pallett recently found herself at centre stage, picking up a Paul Harris Fellowship Award from the Mississauga Rotary Club.

Other recipients of the service club's highest honor include Mayor Hazel McCallion.

"I feel like they're honoring someone who has plugged along, saying she's making an impact," said Pallett, 56, the executive director of the Mississauga Arts Council (MAC) since 1982.

MAC is the City of Mississauga's research arm, the link to the arts community and a cheerleader for local

artists. MAC presents the annual Mississauga Arts Festival and hosts the annual Mississauga Arts Awards.

"Laurie Pallett is a visionary, an ambassador of the arts," said Rotary club president Rob Pollard. "It was recognition that was long overdue."

The award was made at a Mississauga Symphony Orchestra rehearsal at the Living Arts Centre (LAC). The 70-member Mississauga club is the largest of nine Rotary groups in the city.

Pallett is the mother of two grown children and the wife of Rotarian Dave Pallett.

Her father was international opera singer Ronald Stewart and her mother Betty Stinsson's family owned Sheridan Nurseries. Pallett grew up in Clarkson.

She worked as a Kindergarten teacher briefly at Queenston Drive Public School but after marrying into a family with

Mississauga roots dating back to the 1800s, she opted to become a mom and a piano teacher.

Pallett became the music director at Bethesda United Church's and chaired a concert series that began as community concerts but grew to include the likes of André Gagnon, the Canadian Brass, Maureen Forrester and Mr. Dress-Up.

By 1982, Pallett knew she had a knack for administration and stepped into her job with the brand new arts council.

Pallett witnessed the birth of Meadowvale Theatre, the Art Gallery of Mississauga in the Civic Centre and Springbank Visual Arts Centre's role as a visual arts learning venue.

MAC research also played a large role in developing the LAC.

Recently, MAC helped launch ArtsWest, a Peel/Halton arts information service that's accessible via the Internet.