

# Pallett's heart of arts

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Staff Peel *Bio. Nov. 26/99*

Like any fine artist Laurie Pallett left her signature on her work — Mississauga's arts scene.

The one-time piano teacher, the daughter of an opera star and one of Mississauga's founding families, was feted Wednesday by the city's Who's Who as she bid adieu after 18 years as head of the Mississauga Arts Council (MAC).

There was standing room only at the farewell bash — which raised \$8,000 for a new Laurie Pallett Patron of the Arts Award — at the Living Arts Centre's (LAC) intimate Royal Bank Theatre.

"I'm still involved in the arts, as an assistant with the Mississauga Symphony and the (inter-regional) ArtsWest initiative," said Pallett.

Poised at the LAC podium, it was miles from the broom closet office and food tray-cum-desk she started with in 1982 at old city hall.

Pallett was touted for her "low key" approach and overtime hours by local celebs like Mayor Hazel McCallion, Mississauga's MPPs, and officials from Square One, the Ontario Arts Council, Mississauga Symphony and Art Gallery of Mississauga (AGM).

Pallett, 56, welcomed her new-found free time as "a good change."

Meanwhile, Pallett said, "I'm really excited about the award ... for someone who has made an out-

standing level of contribution." The inaugural award will be handed out at the May 17 Mississauga Arts Awards. Feb. 1 is the nomination deadline.

"My wish is that it will recognize people who've been committed to the arts for the long haul, and who've gone beyond the call of duty," said Pallett.

The award is aptly named.

"Laurie is an outstanding person. She didn't have much to begin with but she built on it. It takes great people to make a great city and you're one of those people," said McCallion.

The MAC's Ruth Skillen handed over a Memory Book of Pallett's contributions. "Now, where do we send the trucks with the rest of it," joked Skillen as MAC president Dominic Hay handed over yellow roses. Pallett was dubbed "the heart and soul of arts in Mississauga."

Born to international opera singer Ronald Stewart and Betty Stinsson (whose family owned Sheridan Nurseries), Pallett once was a Kindergarten teacher at Queenston Drive Public School.

She married Dave Pallett

Laurie Pallett bids adieu to the Mississauga Arts Council (MAC)



whose family's local roots date to the 1800s and became a mother and a piano teacher.

Later, as Bethesda United Church's music director, Pallett grew its community concerts to city-wide galas featuring stars like André Gagnon and Mr. Dress-Up.

By 1982, Pallett stepped into the brand new MAC. She witnessed the opening of Meadowvale Theatre, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Springbank Visual Arts Centre and the LAC.

Donations to the Laurie Pallett award can be made through MAC at 615-4278.