

# Speech not an impediment for philanthropist

By JASON SPENCER  
Staff

Some people with a speech impediment may find it embarrassing. Harold Shipp isn't one of them.

"I had a stuttering problem, but it never held me back in high school from asking girls out," said Shipp, 86, whose family business, Shipp Corporation Ltd., was one of the first builders in Mississauga.

"I think that (stuttering) holds a lot of people back in their careers because they're embarrassed — I guess I was one of those guys who had enough."

On Nov. 8 at the Arcadian Loft in Toronto, Shipp will tell the story of how he became a successful founding father of Mississauga, despite his stammer. King Harold's Speech: A Tribute to Harold G. Shipp will

be presented by the Speech and Stuttering Institute. All funds raised that evening will go to the organization, which seeks to treat those with speech problems and identify the causes of speech disorders.

"I am so impressed and thrilled to have the opportunity to share life experiences that I have accepted, and I can also say that (stuttering) has given me a real incentive to be as exact and precise in my speech," said Shipp, who notes that research and speech therapy have come a long way since he was a child in East York.

"I can remember in Grade 5 the public school board sent a speech specialist to work with me for an hour or two every two weeks ... I never found that it did too much for me."

Shipp said it wasn't until 1961



**Harold Shipp**

therapists for King George VI of Britain, the main character in the recent award-winning film, *The King's Speech*, which Shipp related to and not just because he's been to two garden parties at Buckingham Palace.

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that a friend of the family recommended a specialist in Glasgow, Scotland named Bill Kerr.

"I spent 10 days with him and I was much better, not 100 per cent, but much better."

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The King Harold's Speech event will also feature Bob Kroll, executive director of the Speech and Stuttering Institute, and Jeffery Smith, a long-time friend of Shipp who didn't let stuttering get in the way of becoming president of Toronto-based company Winter Instruments.

"Jeff owns one of the biggest companies in the world and I know a lot of people that are successful in business who have overcome their stuttering to the point that it doesn't preclude them from travelling the world and hiring staff abroad and so on," Shipp said.

According to the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists, stuttering affects between 0.5 to one per cent of the population. The organization says the causes of stuttering are not known and the problem

affects more males than females, at a 3:1 ratio.

"I don't know why I got it, but it didn't hold me back," said Shipp.

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