

So long, farewell...but not goodbye, says

MAC's Sinclair



Staff photo by Fred Loek

Mississauga Arts Council executive director Laurie Pallet (left) enjoys a moment with the group's outgoing volunteer president Jean Sinclair at a testimonial breakfast last week.

It's always hard to say goodbye. So Jean Sinclair didn't say goodbye.

Everyone else did.

About 140 well-wishers, including the who's who of the Mississauga arts community, rolled out of bed a few minutes early last Thursday morning to socialize over breakfast.

The purpose of the early-morning gathering, high in the sky at the Civic Centre's Tower Garden Cafe, was twofold.

First, Ruth Kitchen delivered a state-of-the-union address on the state of the new Living Arts Centre in Mississauga.

Yawn.

Then, while the coffee was still warm, they revealed the true reason for meeting.

To say goodbye, and to say thanks, to the woman who, for 14 years, has been the driving force behind Mississauga's arts community.

"Jean Sinclair has served us for 14 years," chirped Mayor Hazel McCallion, looking and sounding far too spry for such an ungodly hour. It still wasn't 9 a.m.

"Years ago we turned the funds for the different arts groups over to the Mississauga Arts Council (MAC), and we haven't heard a beef yet," McCallion said. "Now, that's an accomplishment.

"Jean, you are an example of a true community person who has committed her time and talents to the arts."

Also on hand to pay tribute to the outgoing volunteer MAC president was lawyer Willson McTavish, another of the group's founding members from all those years ago.

In a particularly humorous address, MAC executive director — read that, paid staff — Laurie Pallett described the other side of the petite, polite Sinclair, a woman who could, "do fundraiser casinos until 5



GERRY TIMBERS

a.m. and drink Scotch with the Scots until 2 a.m.”

Civic Centre Art Gallery executive director Fred Troughton called Sinclair, a school teacher, wife and mother of three, “an untiring inspiration to everybody in the arts community.”

Deb Bensette, the City’s manager of community recreation, told the gathering how Sinclair sold herself to city council 14 years ago, despite somewhat “dubious qualifications.

“She said, ‘I’m qualified. I take violin lessons, and anyone with my level of talent who continues to take lessons...’,” Bensette said.

Letters of congratulations from Ward 6 councillor Dave Culham and Meadowvale Theatre manager Paul Eck were read to the crowd, before, as always, Sinclair had the final word.

“I’m totally overwhelmed,” Sinclair said, all the while maintaining picture perfect composure.

“I haven’t emotionally realized yet that I’m leaving. It’s been a fantastic 14 years. I enjoyed it, and it was rewarding to see the growth and development of the community.

“Have a wonderful, safe and happy holiday season.”

Over and out.

MAC vice-president Susan Allen will take over from Sinclair in the New Year.