

Bert Smith

*The man who helped change the face of Mississauga
won't be forgotten*

"Once in a generation is a community fortunate in having an individual whose efforts and activities result in overwhelming benefits for that community . . . whose work throughout the years results in the greatest good for the greatest number . . . whose initiative and enterprise play a prominent part in the growth and development of that community to the point where it is truly a good place in which to work . . . a good place in which to raise a family."

With those words, in a rare front-page editorial general manager Gordon Fairgrieve of The Port Credit Weekly paid tribute to Bert C. Smith on October 3, 1963.

After starting the newspaper in an old barn behind Hooper's Drug Store in Port Credit 25 years earlier, Smith was selling his newspaper.

But he was leaving a different community than the one he had come to in June, 1938. It was a community that seemed a lot better for his presence.

Fairgrieve wrote that Smith "had aided every facet of community life" and "deserves to be known as South Peel's Citizen of the Past Quarter Century." It was a conclusion which was difficult to dispute when Smith's accomplishments were listed.

Smith, 85, died here last week.

The Weekly eventually became The Mississauga Times.

His many friends remembered different aspects of his colorful career.

Mississauga South MPP Douglas Kennedy said two specific projects came to his mind as Smith's major achievements: the establishment of the Red Oaks Public School for the mentally retarded and the campaign to launch Mississauga Hospital.

Smith was the chairman of the Township of Toronto Board of Education in 1957. Through his involvement there, he promoted the establishment of Red Oaks.

"There wasn't the awareness then of the needs of the retarded that there is now," says Kennedy, who followed Smith as board of education chairman. "His newspaper did a lot to further the awareness."

When a local child was involved in an accident and died following the lengthy trip to St. Joseph's Hospital in Toronto, The Port Credit Weekly began to campaign for a local hospital here.

Smith was one of the founding board members in 1953. The hospital opened in 1958 and Smith served on the board until 1975. The hospital is planning to honor his contributions, which include regular newspaper feature stories while an all-important initial fund-raising campaign was on.

Kennedy also recalls Smith as an "astute businessman." He started the paper when the Brampton Conservator, of which he was circulation manager, decided to drop the small paper it published in Port Credit. Smith was owner, publisher, advertising salesman, circulation manager and in charge of printing. The newspaper thrived, despite the fact that Smith served as an ad-

ministrative officer in the Second World War. He was also a veteran of the First World War. His wife and eldest daughter ably handled the paper while he was away, vigorously supporting the war effort through full-scale campaigns to aid in war bond sales.

The publisher was a one-time president of the Peel Conservative Association. Doug Kennedy recalls that he withdrew from one provincial nomination meeting which was also being contested by Anthony Adamson and a young lawyer from Brampton named William Davis.

Smith earned his position on the board of education through an appointment by county council. His business investments, which included real estate in Port Credit, proved to be a big help in making him chairman. The election of new officers resulted in a tie, and the rules of order allowed the trustee with the most personal property assessment to have a second vote. Smith owned the most land, voted for himself and became chairman.

The long-time resident of 12 Oakwood Ave. South was such a strong Conservative supporter that for years, he refused to have the Liberal-dominated Toronto Star in his home.

Smith was active in the Port Credit Rotary, was a founding member of the Credit Valley Lions Club, served on the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, and was a dedicated member of the Trinity Anglican Church in Port Credit.

He is survived by his wife and his two daughters, June Pattinson and Irene Stoett.



Smith founded The Weekly, forerunner of The Mississauga Times