

Bob Speck was not just an ordinary politician. He was also quite a diplomat. He had a way with people that was a treat to watch. He knew and understood very deeply the needs of people.

No part of this tribute to a great Mississaugan is meant to infer that Bob Speck didn't make any mistakes. There is no doubt that he did. He was a very human person.

Chic Murray, a close personal friend and council partner of the late mayor, put it very wisely when he noted that "a person who doesn't make any mistakes is a person who is doing nothing."

Doing nothing is a phrase which just didn't fit Bob Speck. He was always on the go. His exuberance and vitality left many younger people stopping to catch their breath while he continued on at his rapid pace.

But, there were times of relaxation for Mayor Speck. He was very fond of playing golf and he played it like he did almost everything else very well. He used to play in the low 80's and, on a number of occasions managed to work his score down into the 70's. One of his greatest treasures, according to a close personal friend, was the honorary directorship he received from the Professional Golfers Association.

Bob Speck's other "escape" was to get out on his yacht ( he was a member of the Port Credit Yacht Club ) and enjoy a peaceful cruise on Lake Ontario. He went out on his boat as often as he could, but then only when his very busy business schedule permitted.

Bob Speck was a true Mississaugan. Born and raised in the Clarkson area, he later carried on business in the Lakeview area where he and his family have made their home for many years.

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After achieving some considerable business and political success, Mayor Speck was asked on more than one occasion why he continued to live just north of the busy Lakeshore Rd. in Lakeview. He replied on each occasion in typical Bob Speck manner. He and his family liked it there, he said.

There are many accomplishments which could be credited to Bob Speck but some of the most outstanding were pointed out by Chic Murray, the man who now has the task of trying to fill the vacancy left by the town's former leader.

"He played a very large role in striving to make this one large, coordinated town. The blending of school boards and hydro and the elevation of the Township of Toronto to town status, when it then took on the name Mississauga, were all largely because of Bob Speck's work for this municipality," Mr. Murray noted.

The tributes to Robert W. Speck were more than just words. They were well-earned rewards for a man who gave everything he had for this town and its people.

Most people, including most of his council colleagues, felt that he would not risk his health any further if he recovered sufficiently to return to his position on town council.

But, according to one of his very closest personal friends, Bob Speck never gave up the hope of returning to his job.

Just a week before his death, he confided to one person, at least, that he did intend to return to his office and to continue to serve the people of Mississauga.

The courage which Bob Speck displayed by consenting to a heart transplant operation and the amazing recovery he seemed to be making was all a trademark of this man's love for life.

But, it was not to be. Very early last Wednesday morning, Robert W. Speck died in St. Michael's Hospital.

He is gone, but not forgotten!