

Community loses one of its cornerstones, Paul Olsen



By Mark Pavilons

The King community is mourning the loss of one of its biggest supporters.

Paul Olsen, volunteer and founder of Brookdale Treeland Nursery, passed away suddenly March 3 at home. He was just shy of his 74th birthday.

Olsen was hard at work, as usual, at the Nobleton United Church's Pasta Dinner Friday evening. He served as MC and handed out some prizes to guests. He died at home early Saturday morning.

The Nobleton Lions Club said they are "deeply saddened by the loss of one of our own. Lion Paul Olsen has been a great friend and a truly outstanding member of our community."

Mayor Steve Pellegrini said it was "a great loss for our community. You made King a better place!"

In fact, Olsen was named Citizen of the Year in 2015.

Olsen was a strong supporter and 50-year member of the Nobleton Lions Club, and has embraced the annual Purina Walk for Dog Guides fundraiser. He's been involved in the Nobleton United Church and secured a grant to help the church's accessibility. He volunteered for several Township committees and through BTN, has been an annual sponsor of the Schomberg Fair.

Paul's "incredible fundraising efforts have provided many opportunities for various King Township focused organizations."

Councillor Linda Pabst knew Paul for more than 40 years, and he was the first to encourage her to run for politics more than 24 years ago.

"He was one of the most amazing mentors," she said. He was the greatest community supporter of all, and a true friend, who was always just a phone call away."

Paul was chair of the Board of Nobleton United Church. He not only conducts meetings of the board, he organized a group of neighbouring United churches to come together to plan special events. The most notable event was held in the old Schomberg Arena with former Moderator Bruce McLeod to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the United Church of Canada (2010).

Paul helped out whenever there was a need, whether it was conducting a worship service when the minister was ill, serving veggies for a community dinner, making pancakes at Breakfast with Santa, or flipping burgers outside at the craft and bake sales. In the summer, he was often seen outside raking leaves, or cutting the grass.

Paul was also very involved with the creation of the curling facility at the Trisan Centre. He made a presentation to Council during the planning stages of the Trisan Centre.

Paul was instrumental in getting the approval for the construction of a curling facility in King. He was a founding member of the King Curling Club and was an active member of the Tuesday and Thursday Mixed Recreational Leagues.

"Paul Olsen is an excellent volunteer and a great corporate citizen," said resident Nancy Hopkinson.

Paul was the beloved husband of Linda, much loved father of Peter (Jennifer), Jeffrey (Carol) and Diane (Roddy) and Papa to Mitchell, Dean, Evelyn, Cedric, Ava, Mia, Andrea and Nathan.

In Grade 8 he met the love of his life, Linda, and they dated throughout high school until marrying at the tender age of 20. True

partners in everything, they built a wonderful, adventurous life together, travelling the world, growing their family and building their business. Their love was one of deep passion and mutual respect for one another.

Paul founded Brookdale Treeland Nurseries in 1977, humbly starting his dream with a pick up truck, a shovel and a heart full of determination. Through many years of hard work and smart moves he built the company to be one of the largest growers in Canada with locations throughout the country. He inspired many young entrepreneurs within the industry to take risks and bet on themselves and became a founding member and President of both Landscape Ontario and Canadian Nursery Trades Association. If desired, memorial donations may be made to the Nobleton Lions Club or Nobleton United Church. Condolences for the family may be offered at www.EganFuneralHome.c