

Dedicated ?champion? Jane Underhill passes away

By Mark?Pavilons

King has lost one of its most dedicated and committed ?champions.?

Jane Underhill, former councillor and community activist died Feb. 8 at Southlake hospital. She was 83.

One of the most recognizable faces in King Township, Underhill served as councillor for Ward 5 for three terms. Underhill was the founding member and president of Preserve the Village; Founding Member of King Environmental Group; member and supporter of Concerned Citizens of King Township. She contributed through her involvement as a member of the King City Tennis Club, King Township Heritage Advisory Committee, King City Seniors' Centre and a former member of the King City Trails Committee.

As a long-time resident, Underhill once admitted she was a bit of a ?trouble-maker? often leading petitions for improvements to her community, a place she loves so dearly. She thanked all of her supporters over the years.

The legacy of Jane Underhill is multi-faceted, according to Ward 5 Councillor Debbie Schaefer.

?She was passionate about her King City village and the environment. She was relentless in her effort to protect the environment and the character of King City. Her weapon of choice was not bombast but rather well researched and superbly organized facts. She sought out those beyond her local community who had common objectives. Her integrity, her work ethic and sense of dignity inspired many people, including myself, to enter politics.?

In 2017, she received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual volunteer appreciation evening.

Last July, King council decided recently to name the trail loop in the Osmington subdivision, the Jane?Underhill Trail.

The trail is being named for the ?significant contributions she made over the years.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini praised Underhill for her tenacity and integrity. He pointed out a special ceremony will take place in the spring when the trail is officially opened. The mayor added Underhill epitomized what getting involved and volunteering locally is all about.

Jane was an inspirational and courageous champion for many causes, most particularly for the livability of her beloved King Township and the protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Ontario Greenbelt.

According to her family, no fight was too daunting, including the ?Big Pipe,? which led her to found Preserve the Village.

Numerous environmental issues were taken up through her work with the King Environmental group, and the saving of the blue heron rookery brought particular pleasure.

She devoted her time on council to her constituents and the self-funded ?Underhill Report? was required weekly reading. Her vision and dedication were profoundly felt by, among others, the Concerned Citizens of King Township, the Heritage Advisory Committee, the Seniors Centre and the Trails Committee.

Jane's tireless service in and outside of office was recognized with many awards, including the Moraine Hero and municipal Lifetime Achievement Award.

She brought equal passion to other interests. An accomplished tennis player, Jane helped found the King City Tennis Club. Her friendship with the ?tennis ladies? was a source of great joy over the years.

She enjoyed many years of sailing with Jim on ?Northern Pine,? and was never to be taken lightly at the bridge table. Her Christmas trifle was the stuff of legend ? less so the Friday night supper of ?dreaded sole.?

In honour of Jane's contributions, King Township flags were flown at half-mast. A public celebration of life will be announced for later this year following a private family burial. Donations will be gratefully accepted to the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, online at www.Oakridgesmoraine.org/give

