Busy tennis facility dedicated to late realtor Marilyn Redvers

By Brock Weir

Indoor tennis is back in Aurora.

Although tennis enthusiasts have been enjoying the new indoor tennis facility located at Stewart Burnett Park, just behind the Stronach Aurora Recreation Centre, for the better part of the year, the doors officially opened on the new structure, which is not only a testament to the popularity of the sport within the Aurora community but also a tribute to late local realtor Marilyn Redvers.

Mayor Geoff Dawe, along with Councillors John Abel, Harold Kim, Tom Mrakas and Michael Thomson, joined members of Ms. Redvers' family Saturday to officially dedicate the Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre.

Owned in part by Ms. Redvers' son Trevor, her former husband Terry, as well as Adam Seigel, the 3,000 square foot Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre is now the flagship of Tennis Clubs of Canada which, in addition to Aurora, operates similar facilities in Newmarket, Richmond Hill, and Barrie.

?Our vision is to create players for life,? says Mr. Seigel. ?Our vision is to work with as many municipalities as possible to grow the game within that municipality and Aurora is a perfect opportunity because [after Timberlane Athletic Club closed its doors] Aurora residents really had no opportunity within their own municipality for indoor tennis. Working with the municipality, they were able to develop a partnership and this facility on a year-round basis.

?As many people know, Marilyn was heavily involved in the local community and had a great identity with the Town of Aurora itself and we thought [naming the facility was] a wonderful way to honour her memory and a perfect combination. When you start taking registration for memberships, it is heart-warming the number of people who would say to me and Trevor, ?It's so wonderful you named this after Marilyn. I knew her and she was such a wonderful person.?

With the mandate of creating tennis players for life, the Marilyn Redvers Tennis Centre prides itself on its programming which ranges from lesson programs to house leagues, to round robins, to inter-county leads, to casual court times and even a ?matchmaker? service where the Centre partners you up with another player who fits your age and skill level.

Saturday's grand opening was a showcase for everything the facility has to offer, and it was also a point of pride for advocates for indoor tennis in Aurora who led a charge for an alternate facility within the community once Timberlane was sold off for redevelopment.

One such advocate is Kevin Carter, Director of Business Development for Tennis in Aurora, which rallied the athletes behind a common cause.

?I was a member of Timberlane for many years and when they shut down there was nothing really being done for year-round tennis in Aurora,? says Mr. Carter, who collected data through Tennis in Aurora's website to build a business case for a tennis facility. ?It was worth about $12 million annually to the Town having this traffic come through.

?People have been taking advantage of it and membership has been coming in droves. Now there is actually a waiting list to become a member and they are even looking at opening up at 6 a.m. to have early morning timing. It has been absolutely amazing. Every court is filled, it is all ages, men and women, people who have been in Aurora for 20 years and people who have moved here last

week are joining up. A year round facility certainly helps put kids into playing on the Davis Cup team in 15 years time. It is hard to be a professional tennis player if you're only able to play four months of the year!

?Now they have a very accessible place, a very cost-effective place. It is not an exorbitant place to play and I am just happy to see that people who are used to playing winter tennis have a home and all the new people who have found the courts. When I was a member of Timberlane those courts weren't always full but these courts are full all the time, which is great to see. It is nice to see so many new tennis players and families now have a place to play.?