

Betty Pedersen remembered as champion for community safety



Betty Pedersen is being remembered for her dedication to her community and her drive to make it a safer and better place.

The former Councillor died January 26 at the age of 85.

Pederson moved to Aurora in 1961 with her family and quickly became involved in the community.

A tribute posted by her family highlights her work towards the development of the Aurora Seniors' Centre, the Aurora Public Library, the York Safety Village, and more ? as well as her role in shining a light on politics through her weekly television show on the former Aurora Cable.

?Her hard work and dedication to Aurora and its citizens never failed over the course of many years,? they said. ?Her meticulous [attention] to detail stood her in good stead for that role and also in her job as an editor for Canada Law Book?. Betty loved to swim and taught swimming lessons, as well as spending many hot, summer days in the backyard pool with her children. An accomplished seamstress, she loved knitting and needlework and created many beautiful items for her home and her loved ones. Betty had a keen intellect and delighted in conversations of all kind but particularly about local and world politics, cultural events and books. She adored playing Scrabble. Her sense of humour, ready smile, big heart and generosity with everyone she met will be missed terribly by those whose lives she touched.?

Among the first to pay tribute to Pedersen's legacy was Mayor Tom Mrakas who shared a statement on social media.

?I was saddened to learn of the passing of former councillor Betty Pedersen,? he said. ?From her long-term involvement in many community organizations to her continued support of public engagement in local politics through her cable show, Council Connection, Betty epitomized the principle of service to the community.

?Her dedication to building a better Aurora is a legacy which will benefit our community for generations to come.?

Among those to have seen Pedersen's dedication in action first-hand is former Mayor Tim Jones who served alongside her for many years.

?I think she was an active resident who was a Councillor. I wouldn't call Betty political in the sense of what we think of political these days, but I would call her very sincere and very wanting to do the right thing. She had a calming influence on people, especially if things had gotten heated,? said Jones, recalling she was particularly ready to ease tensions when former mayor John West ?went off on a rant.?

?Both John, Betty and I got onto Council at the same time under then-mayor George Timpson. We were three rookie councillors and each of us went on to do our own thing. We could always rely on her judgement and her ability to be a positive, working-for-the-residents kind of person.?

Jones said she was passionate about community safety, with a special emphasis on fire services and her dedication to the York Regional Police's Community Safety Village in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

?Sometimes people are more in [politics] for themselves than anybody else with exposure and whatever, and that's a lot of today's politicians, but where Betty came from was just real, sincere, and probably a role model to aspire to, just to serve the residents.?

Betty Pedersen was predeceased by her husband, former Newmarket councillor Bob Scott, and is survived by her children, Sandra, Diane, Bruce, and Brian; grandchildren Sara, Heather, Reese, and Blake; and Scott's children Steve (Mary), Russ (Donna), Jeff (Sandra) and their families.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter