

## "Brother's" legacy lived on in parade

We lost our brother just before the Santa Claus Parade.

The Knights of Columbus (K of C) is a fraternal brotherhood. Councils are typically linked to Catholic church parishes and members are Catholic men. Members refer to each other as "brother."

The K of C organization is named after Christopher Columbus. In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue in the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria. The Santa Maria was approximately 69 feet in length.

Mike MacNamara, a long-serving member of the K of C Council executive had a vision to promote and bring visibility to the K of C Aurora Council by creating a replica of the Santa Maria.

The replica ship is built to be 1/3 scale (approximately 23 feet in length).

Under Mike's leadership, Knights volunteered their time, talent and treasure every Saturday morning in the woodworking shop on Industrial Parkway, donated by Reilly Lock Group.

13 months ago when Mike's cancer was diagnosed as terminal, Mike responded by increasing his volunteer hours in the project. Accompanied by his son, Rupert, they toiled on the boat on a daily basis, up to about two to three weeks prior to Mike's passing. Mike would encourage the volunteers by saying, "there is no earthly payment for our time and service; our reward will be out of this world."

Mike's personal goal was to be on the ship during its inaugural appearance in this year's Santa Claus Parade. However, on the Sunday night before in the middle of the wind and rain storm, with Aurora blackened by a power outage, Mike's family lit candles around his bedside as he took his last breath.

His crew dedicated the boat in his honour and installed his picture onboard. The parade float was pulled by Peter Diamond of Diamond Landscaping, but we are sure Mike was on it.

The Santa Maria Replica Ship project has been financed solely by donations from the members of the K of C Aurora Council #6519, Our Lady of Grace Parish.

The Knights of Columbus Aurora Council raises funds to support local charities such as the Aurora Food Pantry, Rose of Sharon, Pro Life, Special Olympics and many more. The Aurora Council also sponsors a basketball free throw and substance abuse poster contest for our youth.

The Parade Float will find a new home this week in premises donated by Mary Rice and her family, especially her son Mike Rice and on behalf of the entire Rice Commercial Group.

Claude Arcand and

Ernie Petrasovic

Knights of Columbus Aurora Council