

1,000 people came to say thanks

Art Evans is honored

By JOHN SLYKES

SARIES — They came to say thank you to Arthur Evans last Friday, about 1,000 strong, including without numbers, testimonials from all parties, and a small portion of the thousands of friends he has made over the years.

They came to say thank you for the 17 years he held the Sarsies Centre riding for the Progressive Conservatives, and the 25-year period that he had political offices.

Almost a lifetime of dedicated service to the people of his riding.

LAUDING

Art Evans and his wife Audrey arrived by limousine at Barry Raceway in the distinctive dress of the people gathered for a red, noisy evening.

Among the political guests were chairman for the evening George Taylor, who succeeded Mr. Evans as MPP, Lewis Richardson, minister without portfolio, James Taylor (energy), and John Rhodes (energy).

Each had personal reminiscences about Art, and paid tribute to his dedication, genuine sense and honesty.

Telegrams poured in, including one from Premier William Davis who wrote: "You are one of Ontario's truly great citizens... the accolades are well earned."

"Arthur was successful because he had a good will."

He concluded saying, "You've influenced George Taylor on us, but we'll see what we can do."

Rev. Evelyn Arthur Evans campaign manager, presented a bouquet of roses to Audrey Evans and gave a summary of Mr. Evans' long and distinguished career.

He began his political career as a member of the Public Utilities Commission of Bradley, followed by terms as councillor,

trustee, Simcoe County Warden, and as Bradford's first mayor in 1959.

In 1963, Mr. Evans joined the Sarsies Centre and left shortly after the death of George Johnson, and held that seat until his retirement earlier this year.

TOUGHEST FIGHT

His toughest fight, Mr. Taylor recalled, was that first provincial election in which he defeated his Liberal opponent by a slim 100 votes.

During those hectic years, Art and Audrey

raised four children, John, Donald, Robert, and Cathy.

Art and Audrey received several gifts along with the testimonials last Friday.

They included a grandfather clock, framed campaign poster and cartoon, and a scrapbook spanning his career.

Mr. Evans, 72, now works as a consultant with the Municipal Savings and Loan Corporation in Barrie.

"I don't know how I lasted the 17 years," Mr. Evans concluded. "It's a tough racket. It really is."

GOOD JUDGEMENT

James Taylor commented, "I came to respect the common sense and good judgement of a man who served you so well for so many years... I has honored to have known you."

Political colleague and friend William Hodgson, MPP for York North, recalled the first time he and Art met, during the Barrie race last August.

Art was never afraid of the limo, and Mr. Hodgson remembers of King Township.

ORDER FROM CHAIRS

He recalled that Art, organizer of the barrie race effort, almost single-handedly created order out of the chaos that filled the night.

John Rhodes followed with a warm speech sprinkled with humorous anecdotes.

"I'm here to tell you the truth about Art Evans," Mr. Rhodes began. "It's amazing you held the necessary love at Barry Raceway. Art's been going around in circles for years."

"Arthur was responsible for getting me elected, and I've never forgotten him."

Mr. Rhodes paid a special tribute to Art Evans' wife Audrey for her unswerving devotion and support.

"For all the trouble you put in, our words put in just as many," Mr. Rhodes said.