

Along the 15 year time line from the initial letter I sent to the editor of the Chatham Daily News to the splendour we enjoy this evening, there is certainly a tale to tell. During this tale, there have been many 'defining' moments.

Moments like a lunch in the spring of 1995 at the Satellite Restaurant when I first met the late Bill Erickson, Mayor of Chatham, and watched him in the space of 20 minutes turn from a skeptic into a believer in the Capitol Theatre project. When his trademark handlebar moustache turned from a scowl to grin, the resultant shift in political will allowed us to be here this evening. Without it, the \$1M support from Chatham-Kent Municipal Council could not have happened. Thank you Bill.

Moments like my first meeting with the late Neil McGeachy, when I listened to him respond to my spiel "Kevin....it sounds like you have a tiger by the tale." Without his enthusiasm, and the subsequent generosity of the McGeachy Foundation at a time when ten thousand dollars was the difference between survival and folding up our tent, we would not be here this evening. Thank you Neil.

Fast forwarding substantially....to a moment when Gerry Wolting, then acting CAO of Chatham-Kent, Councillor Steve Pickard, and our General Manager, Dan Donaldson, conceived of an application to the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative for the funds to complete the stage on which I am standing. Without the ingenuity you showed that day, gentlemen, and the support of Chatham-Kent Council to make it happen, we would not be here this evening. Thank you.

A big moment was, of course, the first performance in the Capitol. When the Tap Dogs came out here that night and gave us such a spectacular performance, more than a decade of preparation intersected incredibly beautifully with the programming vision of Dan

Donaldson. Thank you, Dan, for bringing such wonderful talent to this stage. Everyone is so impressed with our inaugural season.

Indeed, there has been no moment in this tale which has been too insignificant to go unnoticed. So many citizens of Chatham-Kent have made contributions to help make the Capitol Theatre a reality. This theatre will stand for generations to come as a monument to their commitment and faith in our community.

There is one moment which stands out among all the others, however. That is the moment I met Bob Fox. We had been at the project for about 5 years, and it had grown rapidly. We were getting a lot accomplished on the restoration front, and employing more and more Job Creation Partners through Human Resources Development Canada. The administration of all this was getting to be a task rather too large for my volunteer shoulders, so Diane McGuigan, the director of HRDC here in Chatham, suggested that it was time to seek an experienced Project Manager to hold everything together. She said she had the perfect candidate in mind: Bob Fox. Bob had recently taken retirement from his position as Director of Education for the Lambton-Kent District School Board, and according to Diane, was a very hard-working, conscientious person. I was soon to discover how much of an understatement she had made.

***Altruism*** is defined as: *selfless concern for the welfare of others*. If there were to be a Chatham-Kent version of the dictionary, this could be simplified to read: *behaviour like that of Bob Fox*.

From the moment he arrived, it was clear that Bob understood completely our vision of a rejuvenated Capitol Theatre as a force for positive change in the community, and at every step along the way, that was the driving force for all that he has done.

It started with his relationship to the Job Creation Partnership employees at the Capitol. As soon as he arrived, he took their concerns as his own, and made their well-being a high priority. He brought in assistants at his own expense to help in this process, most notably, his former colleague, Ed Robbins. In his personal interactions with them he excelled. A JCP employee put it well in a recent conversation: “I have never had a boss as respectful as Bob. No matter how busy he was, he always took the time to answer questions, and to take advantage of ‘teachable moments’.” It has been clear from the dedication of the management teams throughout the project, that Bob has been a great leader. From his perennial “It’s another day full of promise here at the Capitol Theatre” voice mail message to his propensity for starting the staff’s day with a poem, verse, or quotation, Bob strove to make every day a positive step forward.

Bob set about very quickly to help the Capitol put its best foot forward in the community. This happened on so many fronts...but there are some outstanding in my memory. While seated comfortably singing on a stool on the Capitol Theatre float, it was inspiring to watch Bob walking for miles on end, red-faced, on some of the hottest days of a Chatham-Kent summer, glad-handing people along the parade route. It was also inspiring to watch a man who, although the brother of one of Canada’s finest actors, had never been directly involved on the stage, step up to the plate and perform in ‘Love Letters’ in order to raise funds for the theatre.

Bob faced adversity with grace and magnanimity throughout his tenure at the Capitol. When local muckrakers cast aspersions upon the project or even his character, he calmly responded with the truth. When I sometimes noticed the colour rising in his neck and cheeks in heated moments during board meetings I was touched by his ability to quell his anger and find a way through to a more positive place. When it came time to seek out someone to whom he

would hand over the reins of the operations of the Capitol, Bob went out of his way to help Dan Donaldson feel both welcome and respected in his new community.

Bob brought an air of professionalism to the operation of the Capitol Theatre Project. His method in achieving this professionalism was through enormous commitments of time and energy. His wife, Lynn, and his family can well attest to the fact that it became normal for me to expect Bob would answer his phone at his Capitol desk seven days a week. It became normal for me to expect him to lavish care on the wording of every letter that went out the door and to see that the last penny of each audited financial statement was accounted for.

It's when one looks at the truths of those audited statements that Bob's contribution to the Capitol becomes even more remarkable.

It started gradually. Bob would see something that needed to be done, and when there were no funds available, he would quietly tidy it up with his own. Years passed, and the trend continued with the same quiet grace. Before long, Bob had managed to donate back to the Capitol every penny of salary he had been paid, and when even that wasn't enough, he continued to work for no remuneration, and continued to support financially that which was otherwise unsupportable out of his own pocket.

Bob Fox is the largest individual donor to the Capitol Theatre Project...with a conservatively estimated total in excess of \$1,000,000.

In honour of this extraordinary generosity and in honour of his unflinching commitment to see this extraordinary project through to completion, it is my great pleasure this evening to officially announce that you are seated in the "Robert and Lynn Fox Family Auditorium".

Ladies and gentlemen..... Bob Fox.