

Habitat for Humanity receives big donation from local estate

Former *Intelligencer* news editor left his house to the organization

By Ron Lavoie

Habitat for Humanity is \$254,220 richer thanks to a donation from former *Intelligencer* news wire editor Dave Vachon, who died of brain cancer on Dec. 2, 2020.

The cheque was presented this week by Belleville City Councillor Chris Malette, a friend and former workmate of Vachon's.

Vachon and Malette both worked at the Belleville *Intelligencer*. Vachon had no heirs and was a charitably minded man. When he got his brain cancer diagnosis, he decided to leave his house in Belleville to Habitat for Humanity.

Vachon was adopted at a young age by a family in North Bay. After attending Canadore College, Vachon worked for newspapers in North Bay and Kirkland Lake, eventually joining *The Intelligencer* in the early 1990s as news wire editor. That's where he met Malette. They worked together there for many years.

Vachon was known to be able to work under intense pressure, explained Malette. When the first airplane hit the twin towers in New York in September 2001, *The Intelligencer* had just sent the paper downstairs for printing. Vachon had the presses stopped and re-did the front page. The paper was one of very few in Ontario that had front page coverage of 9/11 on the day of the tragedy, for which it won an award.

Malette remembers these days fondly. "There were a lot of characters in certainly not a politically correct environment by any means. It was loud; it was boisterous. You had a lot of real characters in the newsroom, and Dave fit in quite well."

According to Malette, Vachon was also a very ethical person. "Dave had a real social conscience. We used to joke that he was part Communist. He was far, far left of centre. He had a big heart for social causes."

In 2018, Vachon began to experience some dizziness, which eventually led to a diagnosis of brain cancer. Malette was there to help his friend get to hospital appointments in Kingston. On one of these trips, Malette asked him about preparing a will, as Vachon did not have one.

"The guy was very organized at work, but his personal life was – and this is being charitable – less so."

Vachon had a sister, also adopted, from whom he was estranged. Their adoptive parents had previously passed away. Because he did not have any heirs, and prompted by Malette, Vachon began to wonder how to arrange for his estate.

Malette remembers, "Dave didn't think his estate was going to amount to much." But he did have a humble two-bedroom house on North Park Street, which wasn't well kept.

"Dave wasn't the best at looking after his personal life, and his house kind of reflected that. He never did any repairs; he wasn't handy in any way. So, the house needed a lot of work."

Being a long-time journalist in Belleville means that you get to know the local charities that really work.

"I think that after any length of time at newspapers, we see the agencies that work, that really help the community. He decided to leave his money to the agencies that could help the most people in a meaningful way."

Having a cat, Vachon briefly considered the Humane Society, but eventually Vachon decided that he wanted to give to a charity that helped people. Knowing that Habitat for Humanity was an effective non-profit, Vachon decided to make the organization the beneficiary.

After receiving the house, Habitat for Humanity decided that the best way to help people with the gift was to sell the house and use the proceeds to support current initiatives.

The house was listed at \$199,900 in August. It received 13 offers in the next five days, eventually selling for \$270,000. After closing costs, \$254,220.03 was left to donate to Habitat.

Vachon also committed to another large charitable donation which will be announced in the coming weeks.



Photo by Ron Lavoie

Hazzem (Hank) Koulsi, executive director of Habitat for Humanity, and City Councillor Chris Malette pose with a photo of Dave Vachon at Habitat for Humanity. Vachon donated his house to the non-profit. Its sale generated \$254,220.03, and a cheque was presented to Habitat for Humanity.

Loyalist women lose first basketball game of the season

By Bradley Edgley

On opening night, the Loyalist women's basketball team was routed by Lambton College.

Poor defence, sloppy turnovers and bad shooting luck all contributed to the team's struggles. Despite matching the opposition in size, the lack of team chemistry led to some fairly position-less basketball.

However, the team's biggest downfall in their first game of the season was shooting. Lambton shot 42 per cent from the field and 21 per cent from three-point range, while Loyalist only managed to shoot 22 per cent from inside the arch and a measly 16 per cent from three. That is without even looking at free-throws. Loyalist attempted more free-throws than Lambton, nearly triple the amount in fact, and made 19 to Lambton's 11.

The story of the game for the Lancers was aggression, whether good or bad. Early on, Loyalist had the advantage and was driving the pace, but foul trouble in the first quarter led to them taking their foot off the gas. Loyalist picked up five quick fouls in the first 10 minutes, and even though Lambton only made two of the five free-throws, Loyalist lost some willingness to bang around in the paint. This led to Lambton scoring 26 paint-points alone and opened the lane for Lambton to pick up 16 offensive rebounds, scoring on 14 of them.

Foul trouble was not the only thing slowing Loyalist down. A lack of players was the major factor in team fatigue. The Lancers only had six players take the court to Lambton's 13. No bodies meant no rest; four started for Loyalist played nearly all 40 minutes of game time and it was beginning to show in the third quarter. Exhaustion put a stranglehold on the transition offence. Players would get halfway up the court and throw a sloppy pass that would get picked off and turn the momentum back around. Lambton had a clear strategy -- use the numbers advantage to run Loyalist off the court,



Photo by Bradley Edgley

Loyalist Lancer Cianah Miller blows by a defender on opening night of the Loyalist women's basketball season. Miller notched 10 points, nine rebounds, two assists and one steal in the game and used her speed as a slasher to create multiple drives in the lane.

and it worked.

"It doesn't help when you only have six players," reflected Lindsay Bonucci, in a post-game interview. "By the second half, we were all getting tired, and they got to rotate all 13 of their players."

Despite a tough game one loss, there are things to look forward to about the Lancers remaining season. Early season games are a great opportunity to learn what your team is all about and build chemistry together.

For Loyalist, one thing to be proud

of is the success of their schemes in half-court offence. When they were able to slow the pace and get set up, more often than not, the Lancers used good vision to make defensive reads and make the right passes. In particular, there was a possession in the third

that saw Ali Alexander made a beautiful pass from the top of the key to Cianah Miller deep in the corner, who was able to drive it in for an easy layup that made the defenders look clueless.

Plays like that are what the Lancers should look to build on.