

Rotary Club dinner recognizes contributions to community

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KIRKLAND LAKE – Five award winners were honoured at the Kirkland Lake Rotary Club's second annual Evening of Excellence dinner held last weekend at the Polish Hall.



Mike Guimond received the Paul Harris Fellow Award, which is Rotary's highest honour. It is named after the founder of Rotary and recognizes volunteer efforts to improve the lives of disadvantaged people and help promote peace and understanding.

"It's a great honour," said Guimond, who's owned Mike Guimond Realty for 23 years. "Our club has never shied away from tackling the big projects."

Guimond has been a Rotarian since 1978. He feels that the club's community projects are necessary, especially in the wake of government cutbacks to services.

"Rotary fills in the gap," he said.

Guimond was Rotary's president in 1982-83. He is an active member of the Golden Corridor Snowdrifters and has served on many committees including the Kirkland Lake Police Commission, the 1988 and 1998 reunion committees, the men's rec hockey league, the Chamber of Commerce and the Timmins Real Estate Board.

The Jewel Box was named Rotary's Small Business of the Year. The award honours local businesses that combine successful management with contribution to the community. To be eligible, the business must have fewer than 25 employees and must have been in business for a minimum of two years.

"It's quite a surprise," said Kathy Barnes, who's been operating the store with her mother Janet since 1996.



The Jewel Box is staffed with four full-timers and two part-timers. Barnes feels that their contribution was essential.

"Their commitment has made the Jewel Box what it is today," she said.

Retired teacher Carolyn MacKinnon was the recipient of CJKL's Lifetime Achievement Award. It recognizes people who have made a lifelong commitment to the community.

"What an honour this is," said MacKinnon. "When presented with an award like this you realize that you don't deserve it alone."

MacKinnon is currently involved with the Canadian Cancer Society. She also served as the publicity chair for the 2003 Cancer Relay For Life and has volunteered with the Girl Guides.

MacKinnon had plenty of thanks for her daughter, Rotarian Bonnie Sackrider.

"Without Bonnie, I probably wouldn't have gotten involved at all," she said.

"K.L. has so many people of such generosity," said MacKinnon. "They unconsciously live by Rotary's motto 'Service Above Self.'"

Rotary also honoured Dr. Ken Middlemiss with the Dedication to Vocation Award.

This award recognizes dedication to go above and beyond for clients without the thought of recognition or glory.

Middlemiss is chief of staff at the Kirkland Lake District Hospital. He has also provided radiology services for over 45 years.

"I'd like to thank all the staff that made my time an enjoyable one," said Middlemiss.

Although the award winners were the stars of the Evening of Excellence, there were several other presentations and speakers.

The Rotary Club presented a cheque for \$25,000 to Lorraine Robazza, chair of Hockey Heritage North. The payment was the first installment of a \$50,000 pledge to the centre.

In addition to a great meal, guests were also treated to the sounds of Billy Joel, as performed by keyboardist and singer Jeff Brewer.

This was only the second Evening of Excellence for K.L.'s Rotary Club, which has been serving the area since 1950. However, the event promises to become a permanent fixture.

"This is a town that cares," said James King, Rotary president. "This is a town that gets things done."