

Niagara May Not Have Seen the Last of Thomson

August 22, 2008

A native of Niagara Falls, former mayor Wayne Thomson spent thirty years with the inspection branch of the Regional Health Department. His long career in this capacity piqued his interest in local affairs, and spurred him on to stand for election as a city councillor in 1968.

Thomson's success in that venture led to a 10 year run as a councillor. In 1978, he made a successful bid for the office of mayor, a post that he held from 1979 – 1983 and again from 1992 – 2003. He holds the distinction of being the longest serving Mayor in the history of the City of Niagara Falls, an honour of which he is justifiably proud.

Thomson looks back with pride on his success at bringing Casino gambling to Niagara.

"It stimulated the evolution of our city," he says. "There were no high-rise hotels prior to 1991. Look at our skyline now. With the advent of the casinos, Niagara has become a true four-season destination."

Thomson is also proud of a number of other initiatives that took place under his watch, including the acquisition of the railway lands along the moraine to facilitate construction of the long-awaited people mover, the laying of the groundwork for the new Convention Centre, the opening of the impressive new McBain Community Centre, and the finalizing of the agreement with Ontario Power Generation to permit the construction of the third hydro tunnel under the city.

He also cites among his accomplishments the revision of local government by reducing the Council from 12 to 8 and creating an "at large" voting system without individual wards.

From 2006 to the present, Thomson has once again been a member of city Council. In addition, he is also chair of Niagara Falls Tourism, and chair of the Fallsview Business Improvement Association.

When asked about his future political aspirations, Thomson responds with a sly wink.

"You never know," he says enigmatically. "I've always been regarded as a bit of a 'Wild Card'."

Civic politics in Niagara Falls may not have heard the last of Wayne Thomson.