

Chamber of commerce to fete Farron

By Dave Hall, The Windsor Star

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Almost 20 years after joining the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce board and launching a lengthy commitment to community activism, entrepreneur Ted Farron is being honoured with a lifetime achievement award.

"I'm at once humbled, honoured and extremely proud," said Farron. "You never give these kinds of things any thought when you start to get involved in charitable efforts and fundraising campaigns, but it's still very gratifying."

Farron will receive his award Friday night at Essex Golf and Country Club when the chamber also pays tribute to board chairman Jennifer Jones, who will be serving a second one-year term next year.

Farron established his gourmet butcher shop in 1984 and shortly thereafter became a board member of the Windsor Essex Better Business Bureau. He became a board member with the chamber in 1992 and chairman in 1999.

Shortly after becoming chairman, Farron, Dr. Allen Heimann, the region's medical officer of health, and Gary Parent, president of Windsor and District Labour Council, became co-chairs of an effort to bring a medical school to Windsor.

"We lobbied and we lobbied, and we met with provincial politicians and other stakeholders for months and months," said Farron. "We heard the word no a lot in those days, but we kept at it."

Farron said he was asked why the business-oriented chamber was involved in the effort.

"I said we're losing professionals in Windsor because they can't find family doctors," said Farron. "I think that struck a chord, and eventually in 2001, the school was approved."

Farron said he's still involved with the medical school by providing pork hocks from his butcher shop for students to use in stitching training.

Farron has also served on the board of directors for St. Clair College and Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital. Other organizations he's been involved with include the Casino Advisory Board, the Women's Incentive Centre's advisory committee and Windsor-Roseland Rotary Club.

He's also a coach with the Windsor Amateur Boxing Club and hopes to accompany Mary Spencer to the Olympics in London, England, next year should the three-time world champion qualify for the Canadian team.

Other achievements include a Confederation Medal in 1992, the Charles Clark Award in 2001 and a Community Impact Award from Leadership Windsor-Essex in 2004.

In recent years, Farron has been involved with the Cornerstone for Caring Campaign, which has raised \$5 million for a new mental health facility at Windsor Regional Hospital expected to open next year.

"It will have 65 beds, a healing garden, exercise areas and will enable Windsor patients to come home to their families from St. Thomas," said Farron.

Farron also helped established Summer Camp for Kids, along with Windsor Police Services. It pays for 40 kids to attend a weeklong summer camp. Each child is given fishing equipment, a backpack and a new bicycle with helmet and lock as part of their weeklong experience. For a couple of years, Farron was the sole sponsor but has been joined by Drive Logistics and James King.

Farron also helps with the breakfast program at Marlborough Public School.

"Besides the programs directed at children, I'm most proud of my involvement in helping bring a medical school to Windsor because it was desperately needed," said Farron.

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