

Charles Mady's love for theatre

By Janis Ramsay

BARRIE - When developer Charles Mady announced he was giving the city \$500,000 for the naming rights of the new theatre, many residents asked about the man behind the Mady name.

Charles Mady was born in Windsor as the youngest of 10 children. His parents are Lebanese immigrants who moved here in 1926.

"I went to Catholic schools in Windsor and was taught by Ursuline nuns, Christian brothers and Basilian priests," said Mady.

He lived in Windsor until 1990 when he moved to open a business in Dallas, Texas.

With the Savings and Loan Crisis coming to an end in 1989, it wasn't the brightest picture in the United States, as the government bailed out the industry.

Mady soon moved back to Canada with his wife and two youngest children, Carrie and David, while his oldest son, Chuck Jr. stayed to advance his development business. When the Thornhill resident was asked why he's invested in Barrie, Mady says "why not?"

"This city is growing, it has a positive economic outlook," he said.

A decision to revitalize downtown, improve GO Train access and a future university are all great ideas, he said.

But Barrie isn't just about the city's business decisions, said Mady. It's about the people.

"These people believe strongly in their community, they love being here, they are willing to take chances and explore opportunities and to do things differently. And most important, they have very positive attitudes. They want to make their community better as they see a bigger picture." Mady said the donation to the theatre is in honour of his family. "Art is a very important part of my family history. My sister Diana Mady Kelly is an award-winning dramatic art teacher, actress and director."

And his older brother Ray Mady introduced his siblings to opera, music, live theatre and movies, said Mady.

"He ensured that all of us were exposed to culture."

His family still debates Shakespeare, movies or Broadway productions at family functions, and Mady will eagerly show off his three-year-old granddaughter singing Motown on his Blackberry.

"He loves Motown music, his iPod streams Motown music in our head office 24/7," said Jonathan Mueller, vice-president of sales and marketing with Mady Development Corporation.

"(Mady) sincerely cares about everyone in the organization and treats all of them like family. Many of the senior employees have worked for him for the majority of their professional careers. I think this is a real testament to not only the success of the business but how he treats his employees."

Mady's knowledge in his 37-plus years in business, and the fact that he still works 60 to 80 hours a week shows his commitment to what he does, said Mueller.

Mady said when he heard Barrie was building a community theatre, it seemed like a natural fit.

"It was exciting and even though we were relatively new to Barrie, we wanted to be a part of it."

Mady said he loves to read, watch movies, listen to music and travel.

"Traveling to different countries and seeing how they build and develop their cities is quite inspiring to me and it expands our creativity in terms of how we do things here."

But when asked about his favourite accomplishment, Mady doesn't respond by picking one of his brick structures.

"That's an easy question for me! My children," he said.

And while he doesn't currently live in Barrie, Mady said he's hanging onto a condo in one of his developments here when he wants to visit.



Charles Mady's love for theatre. Ron Howden photo

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- Charles Mady.

Helping Hands



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