

## **ROB MILLIKIN - A COACH – A MENTOR – A FRIEND**

Rob Millikin, founding coach of the Durham Rowing Club and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) rowing program passed away on Monday, February 14 at the age of 79.

For almost 60 years, Rob Millikin has been involved in the sport of rowing as an athlete, a coach, an administrator, a visionary, a founder and most importantly, a friend of rowing. Rob Millikin started his long rowing career at Leander Rowing Club in Hamilton, Ontario in 1953, where he competed as a lightweight athlete. Rob then took a short 30 year break from rowing where he worked as an air traffic controller, and raised a family with his wife Carolyn. In 1988, he founded the Durham Rowing Club (DRC) with help from Michael Maher, John Godden and Scott Withers, which was run out of McLaughlin Bay in Oshawa before relocating to Port Perry in 1993. In 1997 the Durham Rowing Club finally had a permanent home in Rotary Park when the Shell house was built. As a member of the DRC, Rob served as President for two terms, the most recent from 2004-2006. He was always involved in various committees and has been a volunteer coach since the club's beginnings.

Along with his commitments to the DRC, Rob also served on the RowOntario Board of Directors as Vice-President from 1992-1996 and as secretary from 1996-1998. Over the years Rob has been awarded the Ontario Sports Award (1998), the Province of Ontario's Special Achievement Award (the now Syl Apps Award) (1999) RCA, RowOntario Official of the year (2003), Rowing Canada's Official of the Year (2004), RCA Outstanding Volunteer Award (2006), and the most prestigious Rowing Canada Aviron Centennial Medal of Merit for his contributions to the sport in 2009.

Rob has officiated for over 15 years, and served as the official weather advisor at the Royal Canadian Henley, Canada Cup and the RowOntario Championships for over five years. His interest in developing a weather protocol was sparked by two events: a storm at Henley and another at the RowOntario Championships in Ottawa. Since then, drawing on his experience as an air traffic controller, Rob devised his own methods of predicting weather, and used this methodology at several regattas with considerable success. Rob's work was brought to the attention of the RCA's Safety and Events Committee and was later approved by the RCA's Board of Directors, and this protocol is still an integral part of weather safety at regattas today.

Two of Rob's greatest accomplishments in rowing were the Durham Rowing Club, and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) Varsity Rowing Program. Both of these programs will carry on his legacy, and remember him by continuing the dedication and passion in their endeavors in the future.

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I am sure that every athlete of DRC and UOIT would have had Rob introduce himself as the 'Grumpy Old Man' which was promptly followed by the comment that if a boat was ever to be dropped, there better be a warm body between the boat and the ground. Rob would have touched each of our lives differently, and each one of us will have our own special memories that we will keep with us for the rest of our lives.

"We are deeply saddened with the news of Rob's passing," said Ken Babcock, UOIT Athletic Director. "UOIT Rowing would not exist today if it were not for Rob's passion, dedication and will to succeed against all odds. He was the reason we introduced Varsity Rowing, the strength behind the scenes in developing the program, and the reason we succeeded. His legacy will live on through these achievements with UOIT and our many dedicated student-athletes and coaches past and present. Rob is one of those very special people that come along only once in a period of time. He will be missed greatly."

Rob's life was celebrated on Friday, February 18 at the Armstrong Funeral Home in Oshawa, Ont.

Our condolences and hearts go out to his family and friends, as we remember such an extraordinary individual.

Millikin certainly left a lasting impact on those he met and his legacy will last forever.

Submitted by:

Scott Dennis  
Sports Information and Marketing Coordinator  
Durham College and UOIT Athletics

Jennifer Durward  
President, Coach Durham Rowing Club  
Varsity Women's Coach, UOIT