

2018 Citizen of the Year – Bob Hebert



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When Bob Hebert learned he was being honoured as the 2018 Citizen of the Year, he needed to make sure his mind wasn't playing tricks on him.

He'd just been informed by Selkirk and District Community Foundation Chairperson Gord Henrikson and Executive Director Bev Clegg that he'd been selected for the prestigious honour, and it was a lot to take in all at once.

Hebert said he had one request for them before he left the Foundation offices - "Can you please tell me again?" Hebert laughed the next day.

"I feel very happy. It's pure excitement."

Indeed, the news took the 61-year-old Hebert by surprise, but those who know him would attest to the fact that Hebert is well worthy of the recognition.

He learned of his award on Oct. 4, and he said that is a very important day for him.

"This was something special for me, because my dad passed in 1980 and it was his birthday yesterday (Oct. 4), so that made it even more special," Hebert said.

"To be honest with you, it felt like I went up to bat and I hit a home run, and I said that's for my dad and mom."

Hebert's mom passed in 2007.

Hebert will be honoured at the 33rd annual Citizen of the Year Award Banquet, which will be held Nov. 7 at the Selkirk Golf and Country Club and hosted by the Selkirk and District Community Foundation.

He was nominated for Citizen of the Year by Record publisher Brett Mitchell, who said he couldn't think of a more deserving recipient than Hebert.

Mitchell first met Hebert after a conversation with Cheryle Bacon, Director of Community Development with Inclusion Selkirk (formerly Community Living Selkirk). Bacon explained to Mitchell the difficulties in connecting clients with local business owners and managers, and Mitchell offered to act as liaison between Hebert and the local Wal-Mart Manager, so Hebert might be able to land his dream job of being a greeter at the store.

Mitchell met with Hebert and was promptly handed his resume.

"I was blown away, I have never seen such an extensive list of volunteering in my life," Mitchell said in his nomination letter.

"It was page after page of helping out the community in every way possible."

Hebert landed the job, which he kept until a couple of years ago, when health concerns prompted him to step back and concentrate more on volunteering.

If you live in Selkirk or the surrounding area and attend community events, then you likely have seen Bob Hebert, and perhaps even know him well.

His list of community involvement is impressive. He started off playing in the Boston Pizza Slow Pitch league and is now a coach, he delivers pamphlets for Red River North Tourism, and volunteers at Mapleton School, where he reads to children, Centennial School's Breakfast Program, Selkirk Friendship Centre Daycare, Tudor House Personal Care Home and Betel Personal Care Home, Red River North Hamper Drive and St. Francis Homeless Shelter.

He's a music lover and attends musical events throughout the city and especially loves watching children perform, either in the Comp's musicals or at coffee house events. He's been a member of the Pipe Drum Band, the Back Pew Boys, Selkirk Community Choir and a men's drumming group called Howling Wolf. Hebert is also a dedicated member of Toastmasters.

Hebert is a tireless voice for People's First, a self-advocate organization with a vision to have people with intellectual disabilities be recognized as people with the same rights, values, choices and freedoms as everyone else.

He is the First Vice President and he speaks to families and other self advocates at conferences and in schools. He has also represented Selkirk at the Manitoba Legislature during rallies and spoke about the closing of institutions at Disability Matters Vote 2016. And, he's competed for Manitoba in Special Olympics.

He said he'll use his role as Citizen of the Year to continue advocating for people with intellectual disabilities, and he's looking forward to the award's dinner next month, when his sister Monique will travel from British Columbia to be with him.

Hebert said Monique was the first person he wanted to tell when he heard the news.

Congratulations Bob, for all you do for the people of your community.

Tickets for the annual Citizen of the Year Awards Banquet are available through the Foundation by calling 204-785-9755 or through selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca

The Selkirk and District Community Foundation is a charitable organization that provides financial support to charitable causes and agencies in their region, which includes Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. Gifts from donors enable the Foundation to support countless groups and individuals in our community. The Foundation has given in excess of \$2.1 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations over its 22+ years. For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.784-9755