

# SPORTS FEATURE

## One of the York's founding fathers reflects on past

By JAMES HOGGETT

The year is 1964; the place, a barren 600 acre plot of land at the corner of Steeles Avenue and Keele Street.

It was here that the Keele campus of York University was to be built. And one of the people hired to make this dream a reality was Dr. Bryce Taylor, who was appointed the Director of Physical Education and Athletics. Taylor's main responsibility was to establish academic and recreation programmes as well as the general sports facilities for the University.

Now, over 20 years later, Taylor is still a vital part of the University in his role as the director of York's Sports Administration Certificate Programme. In this time Taylor has played a major role in the transformation of the campus into the third largest university in Canada.

Taylor first applied to York in 1962 after graduating from the University of British Columbia with a masters degree in physical education. However, it wasn't until the third time Taylor applied for the job that he was granted an interview. (By then, Taylor had graduated from Springfield College with his PhD in physical education.) During the interview the Administration revealed to Taylor the plans they had for York, which would make it a large multi-faculty university.

"I thought at the time I was just applying to be on staff," Taylor said. "But they offered me the job of chairman of the Department of York Physical Education, as it was called then. So I took the job."

The first task Taylor worked on was to establish a philosophy of purpose for the programmes at York. "The way I went about this," Taylor said, "was to contact a number of universities in the United States and Canada, and asked them to forward me their statements of purpose and philosophy."

In addition Taylor attended a number of conferences to gather ideas from the leaders in physical education. "I sat down with these people and asked them how they would do it if they could do it all over again. Once that had happened the programme elements were designed and planned."

Taylor's next task was to hire staff and plan the facilities to be built. As the founding director of the programme, Taylor was in charge of the hiring and supervision of over 75 faculty and staff, both full- and part-time. The facilities that were built were the ice arena and the Tait McKenzie building, which was the central building of the department.

This was not an easy task for Taylor as he faced a number of obstacles en route. Providing students with the needed activities and facilities caused Taylor problems. "The students up here were very isolated," Taylor recalled. "We started out here with about 350 to 400 students

and we had to provide activities for them. We built the first phase of the Tait McKenzie building and then the government put a freeze on the building of any new facilities (in 1972). As a result we ended up with a building designed for 5,000 students."

York, however, is now the third largest university in Canada with over 40,000 students, and has never recovered, facility-wise, from those cutbacks.

Another problem Taylor ran into was attracting staff and faculty, primarily faculty. "We made the decision to go with young, upwardly mobile, bright faculty members who would grow with the university. I think we have accomplished this when you look at our present faculty and I would say that they are the finest in Canada."

An example of the faculty Taylor is speaking about is Norm Gledhill, the new chairman of Physical Education. "Norm is one of the first people that I hired," Taylor said. "He received his Masters from Western and then his PhD. He is now a leading physiologist not only in Canada but in the world."

"When you hire such a young faculty there are bound to be some growing pains that you have to go through, but I think it was well worth the price."

Taylor was also involved in the initiation and completion of co-operative efforts between metropolitan, provincial and federal governments, national sport associations and York that resulted in the completion of new facilities and programmes at York. Examples include the \$1-million international tennis complex and the \$4.5-million indoor/outdoor track and field complex. He also established a sports seminar programme that has achieved international recognition by athletes, coaches, officials and governments. Speakers for this programme had been recruited from such diverse places as the USSR, Japan, Yugoslavia, England, Scotland, Wales, and the United States.

When contrasting then and now, Taylor feels that facility-wise there is very little difference, with the exception of the tennis complex and the track and field centre. The real contrast, according to Taylor, is more on the human relation side.

"We're now getting a little older and probably a little more set in our ways, and we don't seem to have the flexibility we had back then," Taylor said. "We are now a very large bureaucracy and in those days you could make decisions and run with them. But now there are committees and all kinds of things, which is a normal evolution. That is the only difference between then and now."

"I think the thing that I am most proud of is the academic programme here at York that is second to none in this country. Also we set out to show

demetic discipline and we've proven that."

"We established the sports seminars; I guess we've been doing it for our 20th year now and we have had coaches and officials from all over the world come not only to give seminars but to take them."

"So those are some of the things that we could look back upon and say 'Hey, we didn't do too bad!'"

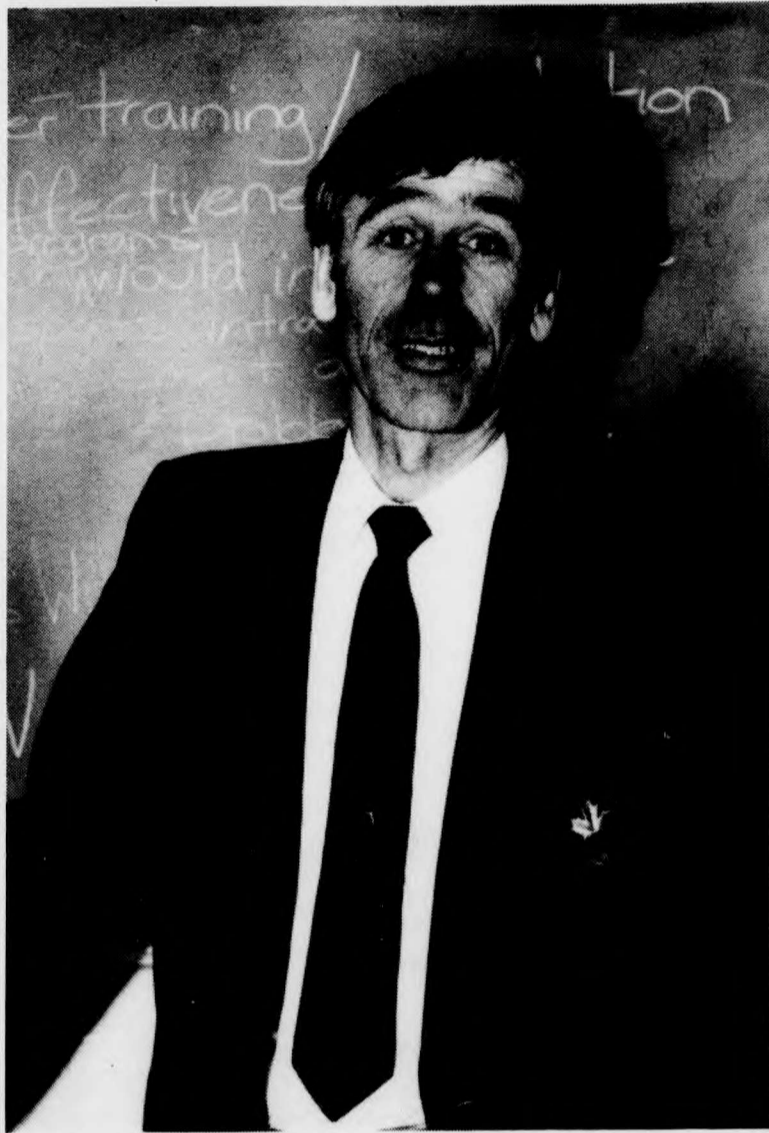
"The one thing I guess I regret is basically that we did not get that second phase of the Tait Mackenzie built."

When asked what the future holds for Bryce Taylor and York University, Taylor replied: "I guess it holds a few more years on the Toronto Ontario Olympic Council (TOOC)." Taylor is currently the Secretary-General of the TOOC which is bidding for the 1996 summer Olympic Games in Toronto.

A successful bid will have a great effect on York's future. If the Games are to be held in Toronto, York will be the site of the Olympic village that will house about 10,000 athletes.

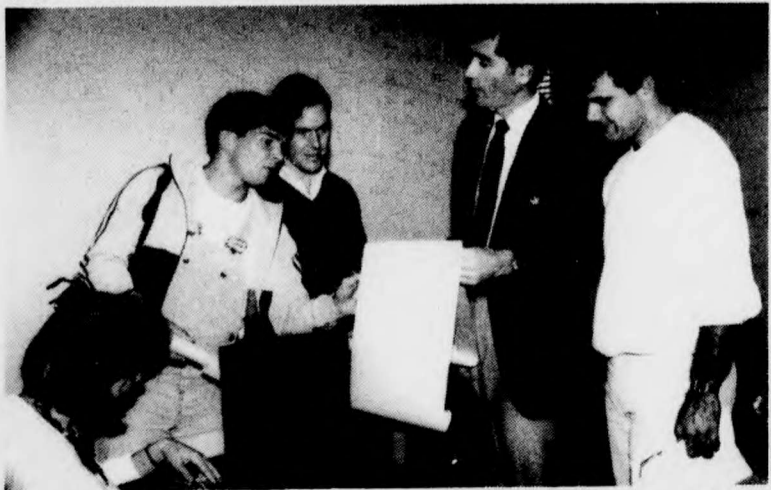
An estimated \$130 million will be spent on this village which will include the renovation and building of existing and new housing, improved kitchen facilities, the addition of more bleachers at the National Tennis Centre and the construction of new training venues. All of these improvements are desperately needed at York.

Bryce Taylor has played an intricate part in making York University what it is today. And if the Olympic Village becomes a reality, what was once barren farmland will have been transformed into something that even Taylor himself would never have dream of.



JAMES HOGGETT

**FOUNDING FATHER:** Bryce Taylor, founder of York's Physical Education and Athletics programme, has been at York since the university's beginnings. Taylor is currently Secretary-General of the TOOC, which is heading Toronto's bid for the 1996 summer Olympic Games.



JAMES HOGGETT

**AFTER CLASS:** Bryce Taylor having a friendly chat with students in his Sports Administration thesis class.

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