



“Without his amazing energy, vision and determination, Canadian Macedonian Place would never exist. He will be fondly remembered by all who knew him and his legacy will be long remembered and enjoyed by many.”

- Chris Paliare

DONATIONS MADE IN JOHN BITOVE SR.’S NAME

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Tom Ylkos and Family.....	200	ProAction Cops & Kids Staff.....	50
Mary Petroff	200	Sadie Louis.....	25

Thank you to the Bitove Family for selecting Canadian Macedonian Place (CMP) as one of the benefactors of donations in lieu of flowers and thank you to all those that chose CMP as recipient of their donation. In memory of Mr Bitove, CMP has made a donation of \$1000 to both ProAction Cops & Kids and the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy. As well as fulfilling one of Mr. B’s wishes by having a portrait of Mrs Dotsa Bitove made and displayed in the lower lounge.

Zdravets SOCIETY

Donations totaling \$5,000 or more are recognized on the beautiful new Zdravets SOCIETY Donor Wall. If you and your family or your business would like to learn more about making a contribution to Canadian Macedonian Place please call Zlatka Cokov at 416-755-9231 or email zcokov@canadianmacedonianplace.com. You can also feel free to contact a member of the Board of Directors.

CANADIAN
MACEDONIAN
PLACE

850 O’Connor Drive
Toronto, ON M4B 3L6
Phone: 416-755-9231
Fax: 416-755-9232



Zdravets

A special tribute issue

Winter 2015

Keeping the Canadian Macedonian Community In Touch and Informed

Tribute to John Bitove Sr.



On July 30th, 2015, the world said good-bye to Mr. John Bitove, and although much has been written about him since that day, Canadian Macedonian Place Foundation wanted to pay tribute to our founder with a special Zdravets edition dedicated to his life, his memory and all that he meant to the Home.

You see, without Mr. Bitove, Canadian Macedonian Place would not exist and it is because of him and his wife (of 66 years), Dotsa, together with a group of dedicated and passionate Macedonians that CMP was built.

This special tribute Zdravets is an attempt to capture his memory and pay honour to the man that many lovingly called “J.B.”, but was always “Mr. B” to me.

John Bitove has a long list of accolades and accomplishments, not only for all that he did for the Macedonian community, but all of his business successes, philanthropic activities and his great big long life of good deeds. This tribute issue focuses on what he meant to Canadian Macedonian Place.

We asked several individuals to tell us how they got involved with CMP and what Mr. B meant to them. For me, Mr. B and CMP have been a big part of my life since a very young age. My father, the late Jimmy Trentos, was one of the individuals that Mr. B turned to at the very beginning when a home for seniors

of Macedonian descent was just a concept. With so many meetings, fundraisers, President Balls, fashion shows, youth events, bazaars and dances, everything CMP related was a big part of our social life. When the home was built, my Baba Vana was coincidentally widowed at the same time and she moved in as one of the first residents. I learned first hand what a wonderful home CMP was and how fortunate we were to have it as part of our cultural experience with John Bitove at the forefront championing its existence. The Home became a very big part of our family for 17-years and it wasn’t just Canadian Macedonian Place anymore; it was my Baba’s home.

In 2004, when CMP was celebrating its 25th anniversary, Tina Argiro got me back involved, along with Mr. B always there in the background offering his support. It was Mr. B that planted the seeds for the major fundraisers honouring Louis Turpin and Mike Zafirovski in separate tribute events that raised the money we needed to embark on the major renovations that have rejuvenated the Home over the past few years. It was also Mr. B, who, during a recent lunch, suggested that a tribute to Chris Paliare was long overdue. He not only offered suggestions and guidance, but he assisted in every way that he could to ensure that each event was a big success.

It is especially difficult for me to say “good-bye” to the man that has always been there for me since the premature passing of my father. Mr. B took my father’s place as my cheer leader, supporter, advisor, confidant--and although I have the privilege of acting as President of Canadian Macedonian Place--I still feel that it is his Home and his dream that we are taking care of.

Marilyn Trentos

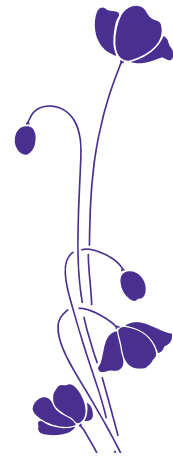
Inside:
Tributes to John Bitove Sr.





John Louis Nicholas Bitove, CM

“Where there is Love, there is Life.”
– Gandhi



John Bitove Sr. (JB) passed away peacefully on July 30, 2015, with his loved ones by his side. It was a fitting end to a man who lived 87 years for his family, friends, heritage and country.

He leaves behind a legacy of love, caring, passion and success, impacting so many people around the world. Husband and partner--in the truest sense of the word--to his loving wife of 66 years, Dotsa. Father, mentor and inspiration to their five children: Vonna, Nick (Della), Tom (Karen), John (Randi) and Jordan (Nicole) and loving Dedo to their sixteen grandchildren - John, Sasho, Jenna, Gabriel, Natalie, Nicolas, JJ, Katarina, Jacob, Brett, Emma, Blair, Brodey, Cameron, Chloe and Ioy. Predeceased by his brother, James, and his beloved sister, Milca (Novak).

John Bitove Sr. was born on March 19, 1928 to Macedonian immigrant parents in Toronto's East End. At a very young age he learned from his parents Nickola and Vana Bitove the importance of family and of giving back to his community. Whether it was a neighbourhood project or one of global implications, he never shied away from what he believed was his calling in life - helping others less fortunate than himself and protecting human rights. He lived his life proving that it was better to give than to receive.

While holding down three jobs as a young boy, he managed to find time to be a star athlete in multiple sports. Hockey was his passion and at the age of 12 he founded, coached and played on the Toronto Young Leafs hockey team, a group of "Cabbagetown" kids. With big dreams, he approached Maple Leaf Gardens about the possibility of his team using the hallowed building for their home games - they agreed. The Toronto Young Leafs went on to win City and Provincial Championships. A number of his teammates would later play in the NHL and win Stanley Cups. In 1946 he was offered a try-out with the Detroit Red Wings. As times were tough, he chose to stay in Toronto and help with his father's butcher shop, located on Queen Street East.

At the age of 18, he would meet the love of his life, Dotsa Lazoff, at a Macedonian convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. Three years later they were married and settled in Toronto. They were inseparable and their marriage would produce five children. Their love was the kind that existed in fairy tales, and they pursued their dreams together in business, family and philanthropy.

At the age of 21, he opened his first restaurant, the Java Shoppe, and the rest was history. This evolved into one of the largest food service companies in

Canada. Despite loudly proclaiming to his children that he did not want them following him in to the hospitality industry - they all did! He was never more proud.

His love for Canada, Toronto, and his parents' birthplace of Macedonia was demonstrated everyday of his life. In 1979 he was named an Honorary Citizen of Metropolitan Toronto and in 1989 he was invested as a Member of the Order of Canada for his philanthropic work. He was a recipient of the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Canadian Confederation and in 2012 he was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee award for his contributions to Canada. He was also extremely proud of being honoured by the Toronto Police Service as an Honorary Chief of Police for his service to the TPS and the youth of the city, in part due to his founding of the ProAction Cops and Kids program.

His charitable endeavours were legend, and started at a very young age. These efforts included: working with the Salvation Army to prepare over 50,000 Christmas baskets for the needy; travelling with his wife overseas in 1963 for six weeks to personally help organize relief efforts and gather supplies for those injured in the devastating earthquake in Skopje, Macedonia; Chairing fundraising for Toronto General Hospital, Cardiac Care Unit; Conceiving, funding and building the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy for those with Alzheimer's disease and other memory-related disorders; creating, funding and initially administering funds for the Toronto Police to positively interact with youth at risk in their communities.

In 1978, as Founder and Chairman of the Board, he and his wife took great pride in opening Canadian Macedonian Place - a senior citizens' complex in East York. It was the culmination of a dream to create a

home where Canadians of Macedonian decent could live and socialize together. It was a testament to his hard work and vision and he took exceptional pride in how the Macedonian community of Toronto worked in unison. Nearly 40 years later CMP continues to provide exceptional services to its residents, housing thousands of Torontonians over the years, many of Macedonian decent.

John and Dotsa were deeply impacted by the experience of the child-refugees of Macedonia at the conclusion of World War II, who are known as the Detsa Begaltci. Both of them had relatives among the 30,000 Macedonian children who were sent to the countries of the European Eastern Block to escape persecution and death in their native country. Together they organized and paid for the reunion that took place in Skopje, in 1984, to reunite them with their families. This event became a landmark in the latter-day history of the Macedonian people and led many Macedonians to reunite with their missing brothers, sisters, relatives and friends.

John believed strongly in his Eastern Orthodox faith and provided funding for the establishment of its churches around the world. Together with Dotsa, they never stopped their charitable work; this characteristic has been instilled in each of their children.

He emphasized to all of his children and grandchildren the importance of education. To this end he established the Bitove Foundation Scholarship award at Ryerson University School of Hospitality, and the John and Dotsa Bitove Law Library at the University of Western Ontario was named in their honour. He also initiated a Degree program at the University of Toronto for



John Louis Nicholas Bitove,CM continued...

the study of the Macedonian language, and founded a scholarship program for the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD), for outstanding students of Macedonian heritage.

JB also served as a Director of the Royal Ontario Museum and as the Ontario Chairman of the British Commonwealth Games of 1986. He was a member of the Canadian Society for the Weizmann Institute and was the founder of the Armour Heights Rotary Club. He served on several Boards, including Oppenheimer & Co.

He was extremely proud of his accomplishments with respect to the independence of Macedonia, which culminated in the creation of the Republic of Macedonia in September of 1991. Shortly after its independence, Macedonia was in great need of medical supplies. He helped organize the Medicine for Macedonia fundraising event at the SkyDome (now Rogers Centre) with 20,000 people in attendance, the proceeds of which enabled the delivery of the required supplies.

On the twentieth anniversary of the Republic of Macedonia's Independence he was awarded the country's highest award by President Gjorge Ivanov. The Order of "September 8" was presented to him for his "...exceptional dedication and commitment in support of the progress of the Republic of Macedonia and its affirmation worldwide as an independent and democratic state."

Amongst all of his business and charitable endeavours, he always found time to be an outstanding husband, father, grandfather and friend. He went to great lengths to ensure that his family homes in Toronto, Georgian Bay and Boca Raton, Florida were always filled with the sounds of his friends, children and grandchildren playing and laughing together. Christmas will never be the same without him. He loved to play golf, and wasn't shy about reminding his family and friends, usually during their backswing, that he had made a hole-in-one and...it only took him 78 years!

He encouraged everyone around him to dream big dreams and that only through hard work and perseverance will one achieve success. He lived by his philosophy in business that one must always be respected. And respect is something earned – every minute of every day in everything you do.

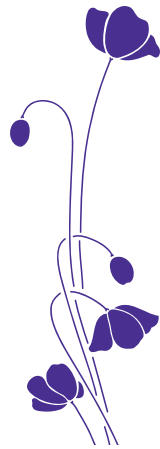
In keeping with his wishes, John L. N. Bitove was interred at Mount Pleasant Cemetery with his family present. In lieu of flowers, the family would be honoured if donations were made to the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy, ProAction Cops and Kids, and Canadian Macedonian Place Foundation.

- As published in the National Post, August 7, 2015



Tributes to John Bitove Sr.

Tributes to John Bitove Sr. from members of the Macedonian community and a history of the Foundation he helped to create.



The History of Canadian Macedonian Place



Uniquely designed and compassionately cared for, Canadian Macedonian Place (CMP) is more than just an apartment complex for people 55-years-of-age and over, it is a shining accomplishment and the crown jewel of the Canadian Macedonian community in Toronto.

Over 40 years ago, the first informal gathering to discuss the concept of a Macedonian senior citizens home in Toronto took place in the home of John and Dotsa Bitove on February 12th, 1969. The Official Ground Breaking Ceremony for CMP happened on May 7th, 1978, and one year later, on June 17th, 1979, the dream became a reality with the official opening ceremonies for Canadian Macedonian Place.

During this period, Dotsa Bitove assembled a group of women and hosted a luncheon with over 500 women in attendance and from that, the Daughters of Macedonia was formed. For over two decades, the Daughter's of Macedonia was instrumental in raising funds for Canadian Macedonian Place and associated worthwhile causes. Today, CMP's signature fundraising event is the Macedonian Open Golf Tournament, now in its 74th year and proudly hosting over 280 golfers annually.

In the December 1987 issue of Zdravets, the CMP Board of Directors announced the sponsorship of a Macedonian Studies course at the University of Toronto taught by assistant professor of Slavic

languages, Dr. Christina Kramer. Since that time, CMP has become the Canadian Macedonian Place Foundation growing and evolving with the needs and strengths of the community.



In support of its mandate, the Canadian Macedonian Place Foundation continues to support the education and preservation of Macedonian culture while providing scholarships to students studying Macedonian history, culture and language in Canada and abroad. The CMP Foundation

also supports Macedonian artistic exhibits, the Macedonian Film Festival, television and radio programing along with other registered charities that promote Macedonian history and culture.

In addition, the CMP Foundation is having a global impact and a voice for positive change in its efforts to relieve poverty and provide financial assistance, shelter, food, supplies and health services to people in need here at home and abroad. The Canadian Macedonian Place Foundation fosters pride and awareness as to who the Macedonian people are, where we came from, and where we are going.



John Bitove (or “JB” to most of us) was someone who did nothing in half measures. He was a larger than life personality. He was someone who always dreamed big. But inevitably he would turn those dreams into a reality often against great odds by the sheer force of his personality and his belief that attaining his goal was essential.

Where others saw obstacles, JB saw opportunities. Nowhere was that ability to turn dreams into reality more evident than in JB’s passion about all things Macedonian.

My journey with John started as a youth. We lived on a street called Caroline Avenue in what is now Leslieville. At the end of our street was the butcher store owned by John’s father on Queen Street where John worked. My mother and I often went there to shop. Our lives criss-crossed for the next 25 years but it was not until about 1977 that I had my first major involvement with John. He told me on that occasion that he was planning on building a senior citizen’s home for the elderly Macedonians who needed a place to grow old in their own culture, eating their own food and associating together, as they would have in the village before they emigrated to Canada. John was not doing this for his own parents as they had already passed away. Rather, typically of JB it was for the benefit of our community.

Talk about dreaming big, this was the kind of project that had never been undertaken by a Macedonian community anywhere in the diaspora, ever. John’s vision was not only to build the home for the benefit of our seniors in their retirement years but also to unite the various factions of the Macedonian community, of which there were many, in order to get them to work together in a united way to complete this project. He achieved both dreams.

John purchased the land and put his money and boundless energy into this project. The Board of Directors was comprised of members of all of the different Macedonian churches and factions. He inspired the Board members to work together harmoniously and they did. JB oversaw every aspect of the building from approvals to construction to budgeting to selection of the interior. Two of the first residents were my Baba Tsena and Uncle Jim. Hesitant at first to move in, they enjoyed every aspect of the amenities that John had envisioned for the residents. Canadian Macedonian Place is even more vibrant now than ever, 35-years after John conceived of the idea.

The list of John’s accomplishments and contributions to the Macedonian community in Toronto and abroad are virtually endless.

I was pleased to have called him my friend, mentor and surrogate father. He will be missed but never forgotten. I must add, I am a better person for having had my relationship with John Bitove.

Chris Paliare

Tributes to John Bitove Sr.

In the December 1987 issue of Zdravets, the following announcement was made:

MACEDONIAN TO BE TAUGHT AT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Board of Directors of Canadian Macedonian Place has decided to sponsor a university credit course in Macedonian studies at the University of Toronto. Dr. Christina Kramer, assistant professor of Slavic languages will teach the course through the department of Slavic languages and literatures. This course will be a two-year language sequence, followed by a third year of enhanced linguistic study of Macedonian from a more scholarly perspective.

The CMP board has set up an education fund for this venerable project, which will commence next year. It is with the utmost pride in our community that we support the University of Toronto and applaud the teaching of Macedonian in one of Canada’s most prestigious accredited universities. -- *Zdravets*



The Macedonian course at the University of Toronto began when John Bitove, accompanied by Meto Jovanovski, and Tanas Jovanovski, asked the chair of my department, Professor Bedford in 1987 to allow me

release time to teach Macedonian.

Following that conversation, Van Petroff and Stan Thomas initiated the use of proceeds from the Canadian Macedonian Open Golf Tournament to support the Macedonian program at the University of Toronto. Concept moved to action and with the continued support of the CMP Foundation, this course has been running for more than two decades now. Macedonian at U of T is one of the only regularly

offered University credit courses in North America.

I never imagined back then that this initiative would allow me the opportunity to do so many wonderful things with Canadian Macedonian Place. I have been able to publish numerous projects related to Macedonian and to teach several hundred students the Macedonian language. One day not that many years ago, I told John how this had all come from that early confidence he had in a young professor whom he had just met. He took no credit, but generously turned it back saying – we offered you an opportunity, but you were the one who made something of it.

During our encounters over the years, John was always glad to see me and interested in my various Macedonian projects. I am deeply grateful for his support and respect.

Dr. Christina Kramer
Professor of Slavic Languages
University of Toronto



My friendship and working relationship with John Bitove began in 1955 when I met John and my cousin Dosta at my brother Peter’s wedding where they were the Cumos.

In 1970, John and I worked together at Canadian Goldale Corp. Ltd. where John and Goldale owned and operated the Big Boy and Roy Rogers Family restaurants. After working together for a year John asked me to become the Treasurer for the Canadian Macedonian Place and with John’s direction we raised over \$400,000 in cash and pledges to purchase the land on O’Connor Drive and build CMP in 1979.

Tom Ylkos

Tributes to John Bitove Sr.



Whenever there were tickets to be sold in support of CMP or any Macedonian related function or charitable event John Bitove was involved in, my phone would ring. “Tina, can you help out selling tickets for...,” John would ask and of course I would always say “yes”.

John and Dotsa grew to be great friends of my husband Angelo and me. We stayed at their home in Florida; we worked together to raise money for CMP and other Macedonian humanitarian causes and I had the privilege of serving under Dotsa’s leadership on the Daughters of Macedonia committee for several years. Eventually, and again at John’s request, I assumed the

task of Chairing numerous successful CMP Fashion Shows for several more years to come.

John and Dotsa always gave compassionately and generously of their time, money, resources and guidance, inspiring me and a great number of Macedonians to serve, work hard and raise money for the betterment of our community here in Canada and in Macedonia.

There are people who are great leaders; people who are great philanthropists and people who are great humanitarians. For the Canadian Macedonian community here at home, John Bitove was all of these things. We all feel the loss and huge void left by his absence. John and Dotsa set the bar high, inspiring us all to do better and they will forever have a special place in my heart. John Bitove will be greatly missed by my husband and I, and by Macedonians everywhere. Bog da go prosti.

Tina Argiro



After I was elected to Parliament in 1974, I met John Bitove Sr. at a Macedonian community event. This began my lifelong friendship with a hard driving, yet visionary, kind, warm and generous man that sadly ended with John’s passing this past summer. He

achieved great success yet never forgot his humble roots in the east end of Toronto as the son of Macedonian immigrants.

John quickly enlisted me in his project to construct a seniors’ facility for Macedonian-Canadians. Having acquired land from Loblaws at below market price, he set about raising funds from the community and from government.

Ontario quickly came on board but it was a tall order

for a rookie MP to get Ottawa to commit funds. John’s persistence was hard to ignore so I called in every chip I had available to get federal support.

Canadian Macedonian Place opened in 1979 and no achievement, other than having a wonderful family, pleased John so much. We attended many events together at the home over the next thirty-five years and after my father died, my mother moved into CMP where she happily spent the rest of her life. The home was all that John hoped it would be, a replica of Macedonian village life transplanted into a huge cosmopolitan city. Yet CMP welcomes people from all backgrounds.

John Bitove’s life was marked by many accomplishments, but Canadian Macedonian Place is one of the greatest. John will be really missed but his legacy will live on.

David Collette

The Honourable David Collette is a former Member of Parliament and federal cabinet minister whose constituency for many years included Canadian Macedonian Place.



From as far back as I can remember, my parents fostered in me a pride in being of Macedonian descent and instilled a legacy of giving back to our community.

I remember endless nights when I was 12 to 14 years of

age, my parents leaving after dinner to meet other Macedonians to discuss building a home for our senior citizens. I had no idea that one day my parents’ dream of Canadian Macedonian Place would be realized. I remember the day CMP opened back in June of 1979, like it was yesterday with hundreds of people—including politicians and dignitaries—in attendance. We danced, we sang and we celebrated. It was a day like no other in our community. My father believed and said that: “It was a day that put Macedonians on the map in Toronto and Canada”. The pride my father had in the fact that our Community worked together to create CMP, is something I will always remember.

Fast-forward 25-years to when I was asked to be President of CMP, in addition to being “humbled”, I was very proud to be given the opportunity. Just months into the job, there was a realization that our wonderful home required some updating. It was felt that we would need approximately \$500,000 to do

One day in 1976, I was reading a newspaper article about an Estonian Nursing Home being built by its community. I thought, we have a larger immigration and we should have a Macedonian Nursing home. I attempted to get interest from my

circle of friends but was getting nowhere until I visited Vas & Zee Yancoff’s home and tried to interest them. Dolly Petroff was there and told me that John Bitove had a group from St. George’s Church doing the same thing. I had never heard of him up until then. I called John and

the work. I called my father and asked for his help. As always my dad said we needed to go above and beyond. “We must ensure Canadian Macedonian Place continues as a first class home for seniors,” he said.

Over the next few years, two major fundraisers were organized honouring two outstanding Macedonians. Lou Turpen, the former head of the Greater Toronto Airport Authority and Mike Zafirovski, the CEO of Nortel. My father immediately went to work raising crucial funds and challenged the CMP board and organizing committee to “dig deep”. The results were staggering. With just these two events we were able to raise in excess of \$2-million, which enabled us to begin major renovations immediately. Today, the results of this are clearly evident as CMP continues to be a world-class home for our seniors.

My father believed that one of his greatest accomplishments wasn’t the fact that CMP was built and continued to be successful, it was the fact that our community worked together in harmony on the single goal of helping our seniors enjoy their twilight years in a comfortable, caring environment where their culture and heritage can be enjoyed.

Let us always celebrate our heritage and ensure that Canadian Macedonian Place continues as the “beacon” for the Macedonian community in Canada. In doing so we honour not just my father, but also all of those who have given so generously of their time and money to ensure its success for years to come.

Jordan Bitove

he invited me to sit on his board in 1977, where I have been ever since.

After meeting John and participating in meetings I was overwhelmed with his energy, dedication, enthusiasm and knowledge. I said to myself, finally we have a true leader of our Macedonian community. John had a way about him and he could convince anyone to want to work hard for the project. His negotiations with the architect and all of the contractors were masterful and Canadian Macedonian Place was built on budget and on time. How many projects can say that?

Those were exciting times. I am convinced that CMP would not have been built without the catalyst of John Bitove. He has my undying respect and gratitude.

Virginia Stoyanoff

Tributes to John Bitove Sr.



If I had to define some as a “One and Only”, my answer is John Bitove Sr. What he accomplished for the Macedonian community in Toronto, in Macedonia and around the world is extraordinary and unmatched.

In my opinion, a person is extremely fortunate to meet

“one and only” individuals in their lifetime. They can have an incredible impact on you. I was always a proud Macedonian, but unconnected to Macedonian causes and needs which affect all of us. In 1977 I was introduced to John while he was chairing a planning meeting for what was to become Canadian Macedonian Place. John had brought together an incredible team of very talented and passionate Macedonians to help him and Dotsa make their dream of a seniors’ Home a reality. At that meeting

I witnessed a leader who ruled from his heart and who inspired others to share his vision. It was instantaneous respect and admiration; this was a man I wanted to help and a team I wanted to join. John appointed me to the inaugural Board of Directors for CMP and I’ve never looked back.

John not only inspired me to help with all Macedonian causes, he inspired all those he touched: his family, his business colleagues, our politicians and the many hard working volunteers in our community. John left us an everlasting legacy of true Macedonian heroes to follow his lead, Macedonians who work together for the betterment of our community.

Canadian Macedonian Place serves the needs of our seniors. It also brings together all Macedonians, unifying us with the same passion, spirit and generosity. This is our gift from the “One and Only” John Bitove.

My family and I are forever grateful for John’s inspiration and friendship.

Stan (Nace) Thomas



John Bitove’s vision to create a home where Canadians of Macedonian decent could live and socialize together became a reality when Canadian Macedonian Place welcomed its first residents in the spring of 1979. An apartment complex

with a difference, CMP boasted 109 one-bedroom private, self-contained units.

On March 23, 1987, I started working at Canadian Macedonian Place and shortly thereafter I had the pleasure and privilege of meeting Mr. John Bitove Sr., Founder and Chairman of the CMP Board.

Whenever Mr. Bitove visited our home it was a celebration. Residents and staff always looked forward to his visits, the babi hugged him and kissed his hands,

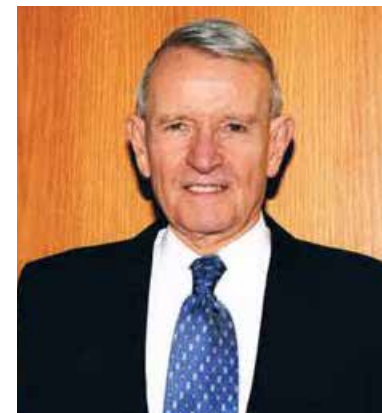
grateful to him for giving them a home. CMP is a beautiful communal place where Macedonian seniors are free to speak their mother-tongue and participate in all things culturally Macedonian, socialize with their friends and neighbours, and keep an eye out for each other.

Over the years, Mr. Bitove called regularly for updates on CMP’s operation, number of residents, number of Macedonians, activities and needs of our seniors. He always wanted to ensure that our residents’ needs were being met and that they were enjoying their home.

Thirty six years later Canadian Macedonian Place continues to provide seniors with an independent lifestyle in keeping with the spirit of our culture, people and the best part of the ‘old country’ traditions.

John Louis Nicholas Bitove was a Macedonian hero and a great leader who gave so much to the Canadian Macedonian community. His hard work and loyalty inspired many ‘Vechna Slava’.

Zlatka Cokov



Whenever I think of the late John Bitove Sr., I immediately think of Canadian Macedonian Place.

I first met John when he came to East York Council with a delegation and a proposal to build CMP on O’Connor Drive. The East York

community and I personally had a number of concerns about the proposal, particularly in connection with the height restrictions that we had in place at the time. But during our many meetings and discussions John found a way to accommodate all of those concerns. He was certainly the driving force and CMP would never have

been built without his drive and determination.

My meetings and discussions with John concerning CMP proved to be only the beginning of our long and friendly relationship. He was everywhere. When I went to Ottawa there was John Junior as an assistant to the Minister of Finance and of course John Senior was there as well.

He recruited me and many, many others in his single-minded efforts to achieve world recognition for an independent country of Macedonia. This goal was ultimately achieved and proved to be another of his enormous number of successful accomplishments.

A great Canadian, John will be truly missed.

Alan Redway Q.C.
Former Mayor of East York
Former Member of Parliament
Former Minister of State (Housing)



I met John Bitove Sr. during my final year at the University of Toronto. My involvement with the Macedonian Student’s Association and the U of T Liberals led me to meet my husband, Tom Dimoff, who in turn introduced me to Mr. Bitove.

women and youth. He surrounded himself with people who could get the job done.

John Bitove had grand ideas and with his determination he brought the Canadian Macedonian community to the forefront both domestically and internationally.

Working with John Bitove motivated me to take a more active role in the community. I accepted the nomination to be a member of Canadian Macedonian Place and shortly thereafter as President of the Daughter’s of Macedonia.

The lessons I learned by being a part of the many exciting projects over the last 25-years have served me well in other aspects of my life and because of this, I remember John Bitove with great fondness, respect and gratitude.

Kathy Dimoff



John Bitove was instrumental in organizing the “Medicines for Macedonia” campaign at the Skydome just after the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence in 1991. He asked me to coordinate the

supplying of medical supplies to keep the Macedonian Hospital system functioning while awaiting promised assistance from the UN, USA and Europe. John’s connections and contacts made the job easier and cemented my profound admiration of his passion for Macedonia and Macedonians. I remember him saying, “Help needs to be given when needed and not when convenient.”

I am proud to been been taught by example of how to be a Proud Canadian with a Macedonian Heart!

Dr. Chris Stefanovich