

# Toledo may adopt sister: young Mississauga, Ont.

BY DAVID JACOBS  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Mississauga, which hopes to surpass Toronto as Ontario's most populous city within 35 years, wants to hitch its rising star to Toledo.

Hazel McCallion, mayor of Mississauga, Ont., said yesterday that she wishes to sign an agreement that would lead to a sister city relationship with Toledo.

"I think we have a lot in common," said Mrs. McCallion, who capped a two-day visit to Toledo by meeting with Mayor Carty Finkbeiner and speaking to the Rotary Club of Toledo.

The initial ties would be economic, but could branch out into other areas such as culture and education, Mrs. McCallion said. She has not set a timetable to begin formal discussions.

"Toledo is working hard to establish a new image and identity," she said. "That is what we had to go through and are doing. We, like Toledo, have to compete against

some better-known municipalities."

A sister city relationship with Mississauga, a city of 560,000 just outside Toronto, would be Toledo's fifth.

Existing relationships are in place between Toledo and Toledo, Spain; Qinhuangdao, China; Szeged, Hungary, and Poznan, Poland.

Mississauga's only sister relationship was established in 1981 with Kariya, Japan.

Mrs. McCallion's visit to Toledo was the result of Mayor Finkbeiner's three-day trade visit to Canada in late September. The two met in Mississauga city hall to discuss a sister-city relationship.

Mayor Finkbeiner considers Mississauga to be a potent economic partner.

Only 21 years old, the city is home to Toronto's international airport. Mississauga has five major highways, is debt free, has \$400 million in cash reserves, and has not raised taxes in five years or borrowed money in 17 years.

Mississauga is Canada's ninth-largest city, Mrs. McCallion said. Its population is projected to grow to 800,000 by 2031, which could make it Ontario's largest city.

"Anyone who refers to Mississauga as a bedroom community [of Toronto] obviously doesn't know the facts," Mrs. McCallion told the Rotary Club crowd of 300 in the Zenobia Shrine.

Mississauga's mayor since 1978, she believes in low taxes, private sector involvement in government, and a "pay-as-you-go" system.

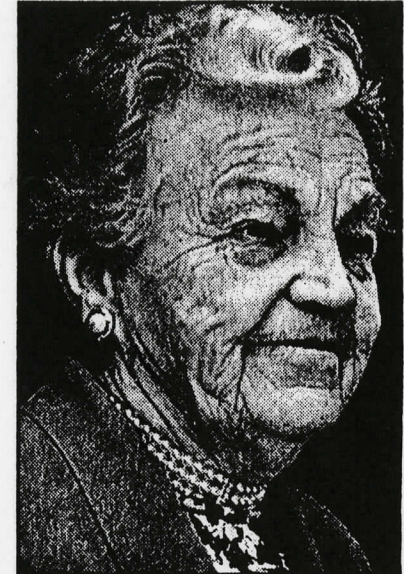
That means the city does not borrow money to pay for construction projects. Tax abatements to lure businesses to the community are forbidden.

"Politicians, for many years, thought money grew on trees," Mrs. McCallion said. "We haven't found a tree in Ontario, yet, with money in it."

Mrs. McCallion, 74, amused the Rotary Club with her humor and energy.

"I am basically conservative with a liberal point of view, a great

BLADE PHOTO BY GREG HORVATH



Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion said Toledo and her city have much in common.

social conscience, looking for a lot of reform in government," she said. "It's hard to figure out what party I belong to."

Mayor Finkbeiner expressed his excitement over Mrs. McCallion's Toledo visit.

"I don't think there is a more dynamic, business-oriented leader in the United States of America running a city, than there is in this lady running her city," he said.