

# A chat with Jack Layton's son: Toronto Councillor Mike Layton



Mike Cohen

TORONTO- Like all Canadians, I was great admirer of native Montrealer and charismatic NDP leader Jack Layton. Sadly, after leading his party to official opposition status in the last federal election, he fell ill from cancer and died a few months later.

While in Toronto last week, all of the headlines focused on controversial Mayor Rob Ford. I can tell you a lot about what I heard, but instead I prefer to share with you my talk with Councillor Mike Layton. He has been on city council for just over two years and he is certainly following the path set out by his late dad Jack, who rose to prominence as a Toronto councillor before taking over the NDP. Mike, 33, told me he will always be grateful for the fact his father was there the night he got elected.

"The night I won my seat, my friends all knew the results," he recalls. "But my dad was the one who wanted to deliver the news. It was very special."

An urban planner by profession, Mike Layton has fond memories of his time spent in Montreal. Although born and raised in Toronto, he travelled to Quebec frequently to see his grandparents. "I



Mike Layton

grew fond of the poutine there," he said. "We have it in Toronto, but it is not as good as Montreal's. The same for the smoked meat. I remember in my family it was between Ben's and Schwartz's. I always preferred Schwartz's. So did my dad."

Does Mike Layton plan to move on to the federal NDP himself one day? "I aspire to get our city back on the right track and keep my plate here very full," he said.

On March 2 the Jack Layton Winter

Ball will take place at Montreal's Mount Royal Centre, with proceeds going to the Morris and Rosalind Goodman Cancer Centre of the MUHC. "I will be there," says Mike Layton. "It will be a wonderful tribute to my dad."

**COHEN CHATTER:** At the Petro Canada Service station on Jarvis Street downtown I went to get my windshield wipers replaced. The mechanic was former St. Laurent resident Faisal Sajjad...The Grand Hotel and Suites in downtown Toronto attracts so many Montreal clients that it carries CTV Montreal...My family and I made our third visit to the gigantic restaurant/arcade chain Dave & Busters in the Vaughn area of Greater Toronto, wishing that Montreal would have a facility anything close to this. This D&B can accommodate an incredible 2,500 people at a time. At one time there was reportedly talk that a D&B would surface at the downtown Pepsi Forum...McGill University Law School grad Jon Laxer has been part of Mayor Ford's defence team in his conflict of interest trial...Local Toronto media coverage previewing the 2013 National Lacrosse League season speculated heavily that there is an ownership group ready to bring a franchise in Montreal. The fact that more than 7,000 fans attended an exhibition game between Toronto and Rochester height-

ened optimism on that front...The downtown AMC Theatre in Toronto, across from the Eaton Centre, has become part of the Cineplex Odeon chain. This is the same scenario which played out in Montreal at the Pepsi Forum.

*Have you got something to share? Email [mcohen@thesuburban.com](mailto:mcohen@thesuburban.com) or call 514-484-9203, ext. 307. Follow me at [www.twitter.com/mikecohen](http://www.twitter.com/mikecohen) and at <http://blog.thesuburban.com/>*

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