

# Empire-Advance

serving virden & area since 1885

www.empireadvance.ca

JULY 22, 2022 | \$1.00 | EMPIRE: VOL 117 NO 51 / ADVANCE: VOL 137 NO 2 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS



Working for the **BETTERMENT** of our members and communities

SUNRISE CREDIT UNION

sunrise.mb.ca

Expand your reach

Digital marketing solutions to grow your business

Reach your target audience through **empireadvance.ca** and our expanding network of community media locations

contact us for details: sales@empireadvance.ca

## Hometown Star “Humbling” For Treliving

By Lindsay White

They came out to celebrate a hometown boy who made it big.

Hundreds of current and former Virdenites, friends, family, well-wishers and special guests filled the Auditorium Theatre on Monday, July 11 for a ceremony marking the induction of entrepreneur and philanthropist Jim Treliving into Canada’s Walk of Fame.

A special musical performance, organized by long-time choral conductor and recently retired music teacher Michelle Chyzuk, served as a prelude to the official program. It brought vocalists Tara Mathew of Winnipeg and Brady Chyzuk of Brandon to the Aud stage once again, backed up by pianist Heather Klassen, bassist Matt Kozicki and drummer Graydon Cramer.

Since 2017, the Cineplex “Hometown Star” inductees have been afforded an opportunity to celebrate in their hometown with the public in attendance, a plaque, special guests and music. Although Treliving officially received his Walk of Fame Star in Toronto in 2019, the local presentation was postponed until now due to the global pandemic. Jeffrey Latimer, Chief Executive Officer of Canada’s Walk of Fame, presented a framed replica which will be prominently displayed in Virden.

“Jim’s life and Jim’s success has taken him all over Canada and all over the world, and today it’s an honour to be back in the town where he began and maybe learn a little bit more about what’s in the water here in Virden,” Latimer said. “By bringing Canada’s Walk of Fame inductees back to their hometowns, we’re not only honouring them, we’re honouring all of the



Jim Treliving, left, Jean Anne Overand, Chairperson of the Virden Auditorium Theatre Board and Vice-Chair Brad Hayward stand with the Hometown Star plaque on the theatre stage following the presentation.

PHOTO/ROB LOVATT, KEY WEST PHOTOGRAPHY

people what gave them their start. We’re celebrating with friends and with family, in the places where they began their journey.”

Receiving warm applause as he made his way to the stage, Treliving fondly reminisced about his formative years in Virden, growing up alongside his sisters and parents Ted and Mina who owned and operated a barber shop where Scotiabank now sits on Nelson Street.

“I’m home. I feel comfortable. It’s just like taking a big weight off your shoulders,” he said of his return to the community. “I smelled the air for the first time in a long, long time and thought, ‘This is really neat. I feel that being back in this part of the world...it’s hard to describe... just that feeling or safeness and quiet. I’d like to thank the people that I grew up around in this town. It was fun, it was great. You walked down the street and everybody said hello. You weren’t scared of anything. You’d leave the house on Saturdays to go out and play hockey on the street in the winter, and you were

just gone on your bike the rest of the day in the summer. There was no worrying about somebody coming by or doing something silly.”

Now 81, Treliving has gained notoriety for both his savvy deal-making through 15 seasons of the CBC reality show *Dragon’s Den* as well as his philanthropic work. His father inspired him, as he would regularly give free haircuts to seniors. Since then, he has created the Boston Pizza Foundation – Future Prospects, which has helped raise and donate over \$33 million to Canadian charities.

“It’s great...you live really well,” he said of his success in business. “But, there’s a time to give back. Everybody should be thinking about that. As my dad used to say, there’s no Brinks truck following the hearse down to the graveyard. You can’t take it with you. You better help people that need it.”

### THEATRE RECEIVES FUNDS

As a Canada’s Walk of Fame inductee, Treliving received \$10,000 to go towards a

charity or worthy cause of his choice. He decided to present the funds to the Aud, and take it one step further with a matching personal donation. Chairperson Jean Anne Overand and Vice-Chairperson Brad Hayward were caught off guard by the generosity.

“Thanks to Canada’s Walk of Fame and Jim and Sandi for your generous donations,” Hayward said. “We are so touched. The kindness will go a long way for us.” Hayward said the funds will assist with a couple of major projects being considered for the future.

“We have decisions to make with regards to our seating,” he said. “We need to look at changing and fixing our seating. It’s a huge project. Also, the expansion of our backstage. To make it more of a functioning theatre. The talent in our community is incredible. Jim, you’ve led us to believe that we can achieve whatever we dream. A lot of the dreams start right here on this stage. Your donation will provide future ‘Aud Experiences’ for our small town.”

“I look at it (The Auditorium Theatre) as a person from Virden,” Treliving said. “I remember standing over there as a 12-year-old and doing spoken poetry for my school. It was the first time I’d ever been in front of an audience.”

After the ceremony, he reflected on his decision to make his own contribution.

“I think the biggest thing is giving back, again, to make sure there’s enough,” he said. “It’s maybe not my last donation. Maybe when they get going, I want to do something else. But when I remember this place, I remember it because it was the first movie theatre I ever went to. I went with my grandmother and we saw a Gene Autry movie - *The Singing Cowboy*. It was before the oil boom as they called it. There was no Derrick Theatre. We lived just two blocks from here to so we walked. I remember my dad gave me twenty-five cents on a Saturday afternoon. Fifteen cents for the movie...ten cents to buy a pop and popcorn. That was what this town was all

about. We had fun. We were high fiving, eating a bag of popcorn. We weren’t talking about anything else...we were just friends. I looked at friends of mine tonight as I was coming out of here. I played football with those guys and you know, where did that 70 years go? Because we were fifteen...ten...and now we’re (pauses) over 80.”

On behalf of Mark Keown, Principal of Virden Collegiate, Hayward presented Treliving with a plaque inducting him into the school’s Wall of Fame. Since 2008, alumni who have gained prominence at the provincial, national or international level have been recognized for outstanding achievements in their field. A plaque will be placed in the school to mark the occasion.

“I wish I could have graduated,” Treliving said. “It’s great to be back in my hometown and be honoured by the high school that I went to. We had a lot of fun here. We did play good hockey and we had some championship football teams as well. I had

