

(Ed: Although sent to the editor, this letter never appeared in the Star-Phoenix after Mr. Mitchell declined an interview.)

The Rемаi gift of \$30 million which breaks down as \$15 million for construction of the "Remai Gallery" plus \$500,000 a year for 30 years although generous comes with a big price tag in terms of donors thinking their gift has any "Perpetuity".

The truth is if you take all the money and support from my family and our business to the creation, founding and maintenance of the gallery over the past 50 odd years along with the value of the art work and convert them into today's 2011 dollars then project the value of the artwork ahead 30 years given past performance, I am guessing the Mendel gift would still far exceed the projected Rемаi \$30,000,000 dollars in the year 2041 which is when the Rемаi gift would be completed. Does this mean that as of 2041 the Rемаi name on the gallery will be up for grabs as well? What are the conditions of this deal? It will be interesting to see what will happen to that choice piece of waterfront property stretching over a half kilometer along the waterfront which is currently occupied by The Mendel Art Gallery, not to mention the building which is esteemed by many to be the best example of mid-Century architecture in the province?

As for the Rемаi remark "A great city needs great art", I think that's a fair comment if a City is behaving as a Great City should. London England which houses the world famous "Tate Gallery" has always acted like a great City honouring the founding Tate family's gifts of art by not changing the Gallery name even though the original gift goes back to the 1800's. Ken Thompson donated some \$400 million to the Art Gallery of Ontario in recent times, and I believe they didn't change the name of that gallery.

One of the price tags that the Rемаi gift comes with is that it conclusively breaks a "trust" which was established when the Mendel family gift of the "Group of Seven" paintings were entrusted to the City back in October 1964. I happened to be there along with my sister when John Climber stated that the Gallery and in effect the City accepts these works "in trust" on behalf of the Mendel Family. That trust has been totally broken. It remains to be seen what the legal future of the artwork accepted "in trust" should be.

There is still a remaining Art Collection whose value is most certainly far greater than all the Group of Seven Artwork entrusted to the City and past Mendel family endowments combined.

Needless to say, if the Mayor and those who purportedly serve to guide Saskatoon into becoming a "great" City were following a truly honourable path, the best artwork from my family would be yet to come and would have found its way into a newly renovated and expanded Mendel Art Gallery, which according to City Counsel in their capital budget of 2009 "The Mendel's ten-year capital plan addresses both the existing facility needs and the required capacity to see it through the next 30 to 40 years of operation". Instead the \$84 million price tag of the "Remai Art Gallery" is more than 3 times the projected expansion cost for "The Mendel", and it creates a breach of trust to Saskatoon's citizens and to my immigrant grandfather who truly believed The Mendel Art Gallery was created "for all time".

It would seem now that the only honourable thing that a "great" City can do is to return his gift.

Chip Mitchell