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Shelburne Giant Tiger owner Andrew Lewis retires after nearly three decades

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Andrew Lewis is retiring after decades of work in the retail industry and will be remembered as a stalwart supporter of charitable groups and community organizations.

After 28 years as owner of the Giant Tiger in Shelburne, Andrew Lewis is retiring, bringing to a close a 46-year career in retail that has been closely tied to community involvement.

Reflecting on his time with the business, Lewis said operating a store in the community where he attended high school made the role especially rewarding. He also credited the business with providing a good life for his family, many of whom worked alongside him at the store over the years.

?Having gone to school here in high school, it was nice to be able to have a business within the community that I knew the best,? he said. ?It's been a good ride. I can't complain too much. It's provided a nice lifestyle for my wife and my family.?

Lewis took over the Shelburne store after working alongside the previous owner for four years and oversaw its growth through three major renovations, including a significant expansion in 2014.

During his tenure, the business adapted to changing consumer habits, including the growth of online shopping and the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, while remaining a fixture in the community.

Community involvement became a defining part of Lewis's approach to running the store. Lewis said Giant Tiger's culture encourages store owners to make decisions based on the needs of the communities they operate in, giving them the flexibility to support local organizations and initiatives rather than relying solely on corporate direction.

?I've always felt that our responsibility was not just to operate a business, but also to be a good community business as well, a good community neighbour,? he said. ?We're not just in it for a penny, we're in for a pound, and that includes being involved with the community first and foremost.?

?Giant Tiger is a company that was set up to serve the community, and the owner or managers have the autonomy to do that in the stores. It's bottom up, it's not top down. The good changes come from the people from the bottom,? Lewis added.

He said he believes a business should contribute to the community as well as serve it, an outlook that led Giant Tiger to support organizations including the Shelburne Food Bank and numerous local events and initiatives.

Beyond the store, Lewis served on local committees and helped raise approximately $450,000 over a decade for children attending diabetes camp through fundraising at the Shelburne Golf Club.

He said that community work is a highlight of his career, and that he has enjoyed working with his community partners throughout.

?I appreciate them all, that's for sure,? he said. ?They've been a fun group to work with. You know, sitting on some committees in Shelburne, like the Economic Development Committee and the Diabetes Committee. We raised 450,000 over 10 years for kids going to camp ? diabetic camp through the Shelburne Golf Course. It's been great.?

Retirement is also bittersweet for Lewis and his family.

His wife, Diana, who worked alongside him at the store for many years, had planned to retire with him but was forced to step away from the business earlier after being diagnosed with a medical illness.

In retirement, Lewis plans to spend more time with his family, particularly his grandchild, while continuing to enjoy golf and life at his longtime home.

Although he is stepping away from day-to-day operations, he intends to remain involved in the Shelburne community even in retirement.